HEBREW MELODIES.

BY LORD BYRON.

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1815.

The subsequent poems were written at the request of the author's friend, the Hon. D. Kinnaird, for a Selection of Hebrew Melodies, and have been published, with the music, arranged, by Mr. Braham and Mr. Nathan.

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HEBREW MELODIES.

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SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY.

I.

She walks in beauty, like the night
  Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
  Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
  Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

II.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling place.

III.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

THE HARP THE MONARCH MINSTREL SWEPT.

I.

THE HARP THE MONARCH MINSTREL SWEPT,
The King of men, the loved of Heaven,
Which Music hallowed while she wept
  O'er tones her heart of hearts had given,
  Redoubled be her tears, its chords are riven!
It softened men of iron mould,
  It gave them virtues not their own;
No ear so dull, no soul so cold,
  That felt not, fired not to the tone,
  Till David's Lyre grew mightier than his throne!

II.

It told the triumphs of our King,
  It wafted glory to our God;
It made our gladdened vallies ring,
  The cedars bow, the mountains nod;
Its sound aspired to Heaven and there abode!
Since then, though heard on earth no more,
  Devotion and her daughter Love
Still bid the bursting spirit soar
  To sounds that seem as from above,
In dreams that day's broad light can not remove.

IF THAT HIGH WORLD.

I.

If that high world, which lies beyond
Our own, surviving Love endears;
If there the cherish'd heart be fond,
The eye the same, except in tears—
How welcome those untrodden spheres!
How sweet this very hour to die!
To soar from earth and find all fears
Lost in thy light—Eternity!

II.

It must be so: 'tis not for self
That we so tremble on the brink;
And striving to o'erleap the gulph,
Yet cling to Being's severing link.

Oh! in that future let us think
  To hold each heart the heart that shares,
With them the immortal waters drink,
  And soul in soul grow deathless theirs!

THE WILD GAZELLE.

I.

THE WILD GAZELLE on Judah's hills
  Exulting yet may bound,
And drink from all the living rills
  That gush on holy ground;
Its airy step and glorious eye
May glance in tameless transport by:—

II.

A step as fleet, an eye more bright,
  Hath Judah witness'd there;
And o'er her scenes of lost delight
  Inhabitants more fair.
The cedars wave on Lebanon,
But Judah's statelier maids are gone!

III.

More blest each palm that shades those plains
  Than Israel's scattered race;
For, taking root, it there remains
  In solitary grace:
It cannot quit its place of birth,
It will not live in other earth.

IV.

But we must wander witheringly,
  In other lands to die;
And where our fathers' ashes be,
  Our own may never lie:
Our temple hath not left a stone,
And Mockery sits on Salem's throne.

OH! WEEP FOR THOSE.

I.

Oh! weep for those that wept by Babel's stream,
Whose shrines are desolate, whose land a dream;
Weep for the harp of Judah's broken shell;
Mourn—where their God hath dwelt the Godless dwell!

II.

And where shall Israel lave her bleeding feet?
And when shall Zion's songs again seem sweet?
And Judah's melody once more rejoice
The hearts that leap'd before its heavenly voice?

III.

Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast,
How shall ye flee away and be at rest!
The wild-dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their Country—Israel but the grave!

ON JORDAN'S BANKS.

I.

On Jordan's banks the Arabs' camels stray,
On Sion's hill the False One's votaries pray,
The Baal-adorer bows on Sinai's steep—
Yet there—even there—Oh God! thy thunders sleep:

II.

There—where thy finger scorch'd the tablet stone!
There—where thy shadow to thy people shone!
Thy glory shrouded in its garb of fire:
Thyself—none living see and not expire!

III.

Oh! in the lightning let thy glance appear!
Sweep from his shiver'd hand the oppressor's spear:
How long by tyrants shall thy land be trod!
How long thy temple worshipless, Oh God!

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER.

I.

SINCE our Country, our God—Oh, my Sire!
Demand that thy Daughter expire;
Since thy triumph was bought by thy vow—
Strike the bosom that's bared for thee now!

II.

And the voice of my mourning is o'er,
And the mountains behold me no more:
If the hand that I love lay me low,
There cannot be pain in the blow!

III.

And of this, oh, my Father! be sure—
That the blood of thy child is as pure
As the blessing I beg ere it flow,
And the last thought that soothes me below.

IV.

Though the virgins of Salem lament,
Be the judge and the hero unbent!
I have won the great battle for thee,
And my Father and Country are free!

V.

When this blood of thy giving hath gush'd,
When the voice that thou lovest is hush'd,
Let my memory still be thy pride,
And forget not I smiled as I died!

OH! SNATCHED AWAY IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM.

I.

OH! SNATCHED AWAY IN BEAUTY'S BLOOM,
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb;
  But on thy turf shall roses rear
  Their leaves, the earliest of the year;
And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom:

II.

And oft by yon blue gushing stream
  Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
And feed deep thought with many a dream,
  And lingering pause and lightly tread;
  Fond wretch! as if her step disturb'd the dead!

III.

Away; we know that tears are vain,
  That death nor heeds nor hears distress:
Will this unteach us to complain?
  Or make one mourner weep the less?
And thou—who tell'st me to forget,
  Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

MY SOUL IS DARK.

I.

My soul is dark—Oh! quickly string
  The harp I yet can brook to hear;
And let thy gentle fingers fling
  Its melting murmurs o'er mine ear.
If in this heart a hope be dear,
  That sound shall charm it forth again;
If in these eyes there lurk a tear,
  'Twill flow, and cease to burn my brain:

II.

But bid the strain be wild and deep,
  Nor let thy notes of joy be first:
I tell thee, minstrel, I must weep,
  Or else this heavy heart will burst;

For it hath been by sorrow nurst,
  And ach'd in sleepless silence long;
And now 'tis doom'd to know the worst,
  And break at once—or yield to song.

I SAW THEE WEEP.

I.

I SAW THEE WEEP—the big bright tear
Came o'er that eye of blue;
And then methought it did appear
A violet dropping dew:
I saw thee smile—the sapphire's blaze
Beside thee ceased to shine;
It could not match the living rays
That fill'd that glance of thine.

II.

As clouds from yonder sun receive
A deep and mellow dye,
Which scarce the shade of coming eve
Can banish from the sky,

Those smiles unto the moodiest mind
  Their own pure joy impart;
Their sunshine leaves a glow behind
  That lightens o'er the heart.

THY DAYS ARE DONE.

I.

THY DAYS ARE DONE, thy fame begun;
Thy country's strains record
The triumphs of her chosen Son,
The slaughters of his sword!
The deeds he did, the fields he won,
The freedom he restored!

II.

Though thou art fall'n, while we are free
Thou shalt not taste of death!
The generous blood that flowed from thee
Disdain'd to sink beneath:
Within our veins its currents be,
Thy spirit on our breath!

III.

Thy name, our charging hosts along,
  Shall be the battle-word!
Thy fall, the theme of choral song
  From virgin voices poured!
To weep would do thy glory wrong;
  Thou shalt not be deplored.

IT IS THE HOUR.

It is the hour when from the boughs
  The nightingale's high note is heard;
It is the hour when lovers' vows
  Seem sweet in every whispered word;
And gentle winds and waters near
Make music to the lonely ear.
Each flower the dews have lightly wet,
And in the sky the stars are met;
And on the wave is deeper blue,
And on the leaf a browner hue;
And in the Heaven that clear obscure,
So softly dark, and darkly pure,
That follows the decline of day
As twilight melts beneath the moon away.

SONG OF SAUL BEFORE HIS LAST BATTLE.

I.

WARRIORS and Chiefs! should the shaft or the sword
Pierce me in leading the host of the Lord,
Heed not the corse, though a king's, in your path:
Bury your steel in the bosoms of Gath!

II.

Thou who art bearing my buckler and bow,
Should the soldiers of Saul look away from the foe,
Stretch me that moment in blood at thy feet!
Mine be the doom which they dared not to meet.

III.

Farewell to others, but never we part,
Heir to my royalty, son of my heart!
Bright is the diadem, boundless the sway,
Or kingly the death, which awaits us to-day!

SAUL.

I.

THOU whose spell can raise the dead,
Bid the prophet's form appear.
" Samuel, raise thy buried head!
" King, behold the phantom seer!"
Earth yawn'd; he stood the centre of a cloud:
Light changed its hue, retiring from his shroud.
Death stood all glassy in his fixed eye;
His hand was withered, and his veins were dry;
His foot, in bony whiteness, glittered there,
Shrunken and sinewless, and ghastly bare:
From lips that moved not and unbreathing frame,
Like cavern'd winds, the hollow accents came.
Saul saw, and fell to earth, as falls the oak,
At once, and blasted by the thunder-stroke.

II.

" Why is my sleep disquieted?
" Who is he that calls the dead?
" Is it thou, Oh King? Behold
" Bloodless are these limbs, and cold:
" Such are mine: and such shall be
" Thine, to-morrow, when with me:
" Ere the coming day is done,
" Such shalt thou be, such thy son.
" Fare thee well, but for a day;
" Then we mix our mouldering clay.
" Thou, thy race, lie pale and low,
" Pierced by shafts of many a bow;
" And the falchion by thy side,
" To thy heart, thy hand shall guide:
" Crownless, breathless, headless fall,
" Son and sire, the house of Saul!"

"ALL IS VANITY, SAITH THE PREACHER."

I.

FAME, wisdom, love, and power were mine,
And health and youth possess'd me;
My goblets blush'd from every vine,
And lovely forms caress'd me;

I sunn'd my heart in beauty's eyes,
And felt my soul grow tender;
All earth can give, or mortal prize,
Was mine of regal splendour.

II.

I strive to number o'er what days
  Remembrance can discover,
Which all that life or earth displays
  Would lure me to live over.

There rose no day, there roll'd no hour
  Of pleasure unembittered;
And not a trapping deck'd my power
  That gall'd not while it glittered.

III.

The serpent of the field, by art
  And spells, is won from harming;
But that which coils around the heart,
  Oh! who hath power of charming?

It will not list to wisdom's lore,
  Nor music's voice can lure it;
But there it stings for evermore
  The soul that must endure it.

WHEN COLDNESS WRAPS THIS SUFFERING CLAY.

I.

WHEN COLDNESS WRAPS THIS SUFFERING CLAY,
  Ah, whither strays the immortal mind?
It cannot die, it cannot stay,
  But leaves its darken'd dust behind.
Then, unembodied, doth it trace
  By steps each planet's heavenly way?
Or fill at once the realms of space,
  A thing of eyes, that all survey?

II.

Eternal, boundless, undecay'd,
  A thought unseen, but seeing all,
All, all in earth, or skies display'd,
  Shall it survey, shall it recal:

Each fainter trace that memory holds
  So darkly of departed years,
In one broad glance the soul beholds,
  And all, that was, at once appears.

III.

Before Creation peopled earth,
  Its eye shall roll through chaos back;
And where the furthest heaven had birth,
  The spirit trace its rising track.
And where the future mars or makes,
  Its glance dilate o'er all to be,
While sun is quench'd or system breaks,
  Fix'd in its own eternity.

IV.

Above or Love, Hope, Hate, or Fear,
  It lives all passionless and pure:
An age shall fleet like earthly year;
  Its years as moments shall endure.

Away, away, without a wing,
O'er all, through all, its thought shall fly;
A nameless and eternal thing,
Forgetting what it was to die.

VISION OF BELSHAZZAR.

I.

The King was on his throne,
  The Satraps throng'd the hall;
A thousand bright lamps shone
  O'er that high festival.
A thousand cups of gold,
  In Judah deem'd divine—
Jehovah's vessels hold
  The godless Heathen's wine!

II.

In that same hour and hall,
  The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
  And wrote as if on sand:
The fingers of a man;—
  A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
  And traced them like a wand.

III.

The monarch saw, and shook,
  And bade no more rejoice;
All bloodless wax'd his look,
  And tremulous his voice.
" Let the men of lore appear,
  " The wisest of the earth,
" And expound the words of fear,
  " Which mar our royal mirth."

IV.

Chaldea's seers are good,
But here they have no skill;
And the unknown letters stood
Untold and awful still.
And Babel's men of age
Are wise and deep in lore;
But now they were not sage,
They saw—but knew no more.

V.

A captive in the land,
A stranger and a youth,
He heard the king's command,
He saw that writing's truth.
The lamps around were bright,
The prophecy in view;
He read it on that night,—
The morrow proved it true.

VI.

" Belshazzar's grave is made,
" His kingdom pass'd away,
" He in the balance weighed,
" Is light and worthless clay.
" The shroud, his robe of state,
" His canopy, the stone;
" The Mede is at his gate!
" The Persian on his throne!"

SUN OF THE SLEEPLESS!

SUN OF THE SLEEPLESS! melancholy star!
Whose tearful beam glows tremulously far,
That show'st the darkness thou canst not dispel,
How like art thou to joy remembered well!
So gleams the past, the light of other days,
Which shines, but warms not with its powerless rays;
A night-beam Sorrow watcheth to behold,
Distinct, but distant—clear—but, oh how cold!

WERE MY BOSOM AS FALSE AS THOU DEEM'ST IT TO BE.

I.

WERE MY BOSOM AS FALSE AS THOU DEEM'ST IT TO BE,
I need not have wandered from far Galilee;
It was but abjuring my creed to efface
The curse which, thou say'st, is the crime of my race.

II.

If the bad never triumph, then God is with thee!
If the slave only sin, thou art spotless and free!
If the Exile on earth is an Outcast on high,
Live on in thy faith, but in mine I will die.

III.

I have lost for that faith more than thou canst bestow,
As the God who permits thee to prosper doth know;
In his hand is my heart and my hope—and in thine
The land and the life which for him I resign.

HEROD'S LAMENT FOR MARIAMNE.

I.

Oh, Mariamne! now for thee
  The heart for which thou bled'st is bleeding;
Revenge is lost in agony,
  And wild remorse to rage succeeding.
Oh, Mariamne! where art thou?
  Thou canst not hear my bitter pleading:
Ah, could'st thou—thou would'st pardon now,
  Though heaven were to my prayer unheeding.

II.

And is she dead?—and did they dare
  Obey my phrensy's jealous raving?
My wrath but doom'd my own despair:
  The sword that smote her 's o'er me waving.—
But thou art cold, my murdered love!
  And this dark heart is vainly craving
For her who soars alone above,
  And leaves my soul unworthy saving.

III.

She's gone, who shared my diadem;
  She sunk, with her my joys entombing;
I swept that flower from Judah's stem
  Whose leaves for me alone were blooming.
And mine's the guilt, and mine the hell,
  This bosom's desolation dooming;
And I have earn'd those tortures well,
  Which unconsumed are still consuming!

ON THE DAY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM BY TITUS.

I.

FROM the last hill that looks on thy once holy dome
I beheld thee, Oh SION! when rendered to Rome:
'Twas thy last sun went down, and the flames of thy fall
Flash'd back on the last glance I gave to thy wall.

II.

I look'd for thy temple, I look'd for my home,
And forgot for a moment my bondage to come;
I beheld but the death-fire that fed on thy fane,
And the fast-fettered hands that made vengeance in vain.

III.

On many an eve, the high spot whence I gazed
Had reflected the last beam of day as it blazed;
While I stood on the height, and beheld the decline
Of the rays from the mountain that shone on thy shrine.

IV.

And now on that mountain I stood on that day,
But I mark'd not the twilight beam melting away;
Oh! would that the lightning had glared in its stead,
And the thunderbolt burst on the conqueror's head!

V.

But the Gods of the Pagan shall never profane
The shrine where Jehovah disdain'd not to reign;
And scattered and scorn'd as thy people may be,
Our worship, oh Father! is only for thee.

BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON WE SAT DOWN AND WEPT.

I.

We sate down and wept by the waters
Of Babel, and thought of the day
When our foe, in the hue of his slaughters,
Made Salem's high places his prey;
And ye, oh her desolate daughters!
Were scattered all weeping away.

II.

While sadly we gazed on the river
Which roll'd on in freedom below,
They demanded the song; but, oh never
That triumph the stranger shall know!
May this right hand be withered for ever,
Ere it string our high harp for the foe!

III.

On the willow that harp is suspended,
  Oh Salem! its sound should be free;
And the hour when thy glories were ended
  But left me that token of thee:
And ne'er shall its soft tones be blended
  With the voice of the spoiler by me!

THE DESTRUCTION OF SEMNACHERIB.

I.

THE Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

II.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

III.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd;
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

IV.

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there roll'd not the breath of his pride:
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

V.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

VI.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

FROM JOB.

I.

A SPIRIT pass'd before me: I beheld
The face of Immortality unveil'd—
Deep sleep came down on ev'ry eye save mine—
And there it stood,—all formless—but divine:
Along my bones the creeping flesh did quake;
And as my damp hair stiffen'd, thus it spake:

II.

"Is man more just than God? Is man more pure
Than he who deems even Seraphs insecure?
Creatures of clay—vain dwellers in the dust!
The moth survives you, and are ye more just?
Things of a day! you wither ere the night,
Heedless and blind to Wisdom's wasted light!"

ON THE DEATH

OF

SIR PETER PARKER, BART.

THERE is a tear for all that die,
  A mourner o'er the humblest grave;
But nations swell the funeral cry,
  And Triumph weeps above the brave.

For them is Sorrow's purest sigh
  O'er Ocean's heaving bosom sent:
In vain their bones unburied lie,
  All earth becomes their monument!

A tomb is theirs on every page,
  An epitaph on every tongue:
The present hours, the future age,
  For them bewail, to them belong.

For them the voice of festal mirth
  Grows hushed, *their name* the only sound;
While deep Remembrance pours to Worth
  The goblet's tributary round.

A theme to crowds that knew them not,
  Lamented by admiring foes,
Who would not share their glorious lot?
  Who would not die the death they chose?

And, gallant Parker! thus enshrined
  Thy life, thy fall, thy fame shall be;
And early valour, glowing, find
  A model in thy memory.

But there are breasts that bleed with thee
  In woe, that glory cannot quell;
And shuddering hear of victory,
  Where one so dear, so dauntless, fell.

Where shall they turn to mourn thee less?
  When cease to hear thy cherished name?
Time cannot teach forgetfulness,
  While Grief's full heart is fed by Fame.

Alas! for them, though not for thee,
  They cannot choose but weep the more;
Deep for the dead the grief must be
  Who ne'er gave cause to mourn before.

THE END.

THE

SIEGE OF CORINTH.

A POEM.

PARISINA.

A POEM.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1816.

THE

SIEGE OF CORINTH.

"Guns, Trumpets, Blunderbusses, Drums, and Thunder."

TO

JOHN HOBHOUSE, ESQ.

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED

BY HIS

FRIEND.

Jan. 22, 1816.

ADVERTISEMENT.

"THE grand army of the Turks (in 1715), under the "Prime Vizier, to open to themselves a way into the "heart of the Morea, and to form the siege of Napoli di "Romania, the most considerable place in all that coun-"try*, thought it best in the first place to attack Corinth, "upon which they made several storms. The garrison "being weakened, and the governor seeing it was impos-"sible to hold out against so mighty a force, thought fit "to beat a parley: but while they were treating about "the articles, one of the magazines in the Turkish camp, "wherein they had six hundred barrels of powder, blew

* Napoli di Romania is not now the most considerable place in the Morea, but Tripolitza, where the Pacha resides, and maintains his government. Napoli is near Argos. I visited all three in 1810-11; and in the course of journeying through the country from my first arrival in 1809, I crossed the Isthmus eight times in my way from Attica to the Morea, over the mountains, or in the other direction, when passing from the Gulf of Athens to that of Lepanto. Both the routes are picturesque and beautiful, though very different: that by sea has more sameness, but the voyage being always within sight of land, and often very near it, presents many attractive views of the islands Salamis, Ægina, Poro, &c. and the coast of the continent.

"up by accident, whereby six or seven hundred men "were killed: which so enraged the infidels, that they "would not grant any capitulation, but stormed the "place with so much fury, that they took it, and put "most of the garrison, with Signior Minotti, the gover-"nor, to the sword. The rest, with Antonio Bembo, "proveditor extraordinary, were made prisoners of war."

History of the Turks, vol. iii. p. 151.

THE

SIEGE OF CORINTH.

I.

MANY a vanished year and age,
And tempest's breath, and battle's rage,
Have swept o'er Corinth; yet she stands
A fortress formed to Freedom's hands.
The whirlwind's wrath, the earthquake's shock, 5
Have left untouched her hoary rock,
The keystone of a land, which still,
Though fall'n, looks proudly on that hill,
The land-mark to the double tide
That purpling rolls on either side, 10
As if their waters chafed to meet,
Yet pause and crouch beneath her feet.
But could the blood before her shed
Since first Timoleon's brother bled,

Or baffled Persia's despot fled, 15
Arise from out the earth which drank
The stream of slaughter as it sank,
That sanguine ocean would o'erflow
Her isthmus idly spread below:
Or could the bones of all the slain, 20
Who perished there, be piled again,
That rival pyramid would rise
More mountain-like, through those clear skies,
Than yon tower-capt Acropolis
Which seems the very clouds to kiss. 25

II.

On dun Cithæron's ridge appears
The gleam of twice ten thousand spears;
And downward to the Isthmian plain
From shore to shore of either main,
The tent is pitched, the crescent shines 30
Along the Moslem's leaguering lines;
And the dusk Spahi's bands advance
Beneath each bearded pasha's glance;
And far and wide as eye can reach
The turban'd cohorts throng the beach; 35

And there the Arab's camel kneels,
And there his steed the Tartar wheels;
The Turcoman hath left his herd[1],
The sabre round his loins to gird;
And there the volleying thunders pour, 40
Till waves grow smoother to the roar.
The trench is dug, the cannon's breath
Wings the far hissing globe of death;
Fast whirl the fragments from the wall,
Which crumbles with the ponderous ball; 45
And from that wall the foe replies,
O'er dusty plain and smoky skies,
With fires that answer fast and well
The summons of the Infidel.

III.

But near and nearest to the wall 50
Of those who wish and work its fall,
With deeper skill in war's black art
Than Othman's sons, and high of heart
As any chief that ever stood
Triumphant in the fields of blood; 55
From post to post, and deed to deed,
Fast spurring on his reeking steed,

Where sallying ranks the trench assail,
And make the foremost Moslem quail;
Or where the battery guarded well, 60
Remains as yet impregnable,
Alighting cheerly to inspire
The soldier slackening in his fire;
The first and freshest of the host
Which Stamboul's sultan there can boast, 65
To guide the follower o'er the field,
To point the tube, the lance to wield,
Or whirl around the bickering blade;—
Was Alp, the Adrian renegade!

IV.

From Venice—once a race of worth 70
His gentle sires—he drew his birth;
But late an exile from her shore,
Against his countrymen he bore
The arms they taught to bear; and now
The turban girt his shaven brow. 75
Through many a change had Corinth passed
With Greece to Venice' rule at last;
And here, before her walls, with those
To Greece and Venice equal foes,

He stood a foe, with all the zeal 80
Which young and fiery converts feel,
Within whose heated bosom throngs
The memory of a thousand wrongs.
To him had Venice ceased to be
Her ancient civic boast—" the Free;" 85
And in the palace of St. Mark
Unnamed accusers in the dark
Within the " Lion's mouth" had placed
A charge against him uneffaced:
He fled in time, and saved his life, 90
To waste his future years in strife,
That taught his land how great her loss
In him who triumphed o'er the Cross,
'Gainst which he reared the Crescent high,
And battled to avenge or die. 95

V.

Coumourgi[2]—he whose closing scene
Adorned the triumph of Eugene,
When on Carlowitz' bloody plain
The last and mightiest of the slain
He sank, regretting not to die, 100
But curst the Christian's victory—

Coumourgi—can his glory cease,
That latest conqueror of Greece,
Till Christian hands to Greece restore
The freedom Venice gave of yore? 105
A hundred years have rolled away
Since he refixed the Moslem's sway;
And now he led the Mussulman,
And gave the guidance of the van
To Alp, who well repaid the trust 110
By cities levelled with the dust;
And proved, by many a deed of death,
How firm his heart in novel faith.

VI.

The walls grew weak; and fast and hot
Against them poured the ceaseless shot, 115
With unabating fury sent
From battery to battlement;
And thunder-like the pealing din
Rose from each heated culverin;
And here and there some crackling dome 120
Was fired before the exploding bomb:
And as the fabric sank beneath
The shattering shell's volcanic breath,

In red and wreathing columns flashed
The flame, as loud the ruin crashed, 125
Or into countless meteors driven,
Its earth-stars melted into heaven;
Whose clouds that day grew doubly dun,
Impervious to the hidden sun,
With volumed smoke that slowly grew 130
To one wide sky of sulphurous hue.

VII.

But not for vengeance, long delayed,
Alone, did Alp, the renegade,
The Moslem warriors sternly teach
His skill to pierce the promised breach: 135
Within these walls a maid was pent
His hope would win, without consent
Of that inexorable sire,
Whose heart refused him in its ire,
When Alp, beneath his Christian name, 140
Her virgin hand aspired to claim.
In happier mood, and earlier time,
While unimpeached for traitorous crime,
Gayest in gondola or hall,
He glittered through the Carnival; 145

And tuned the softest serenade
That e'er on Adria's waters played
At midnight to Italian maid.

VIII.

And many deemed her heart was won;
For sought by numbers, given to none, 150
Had young Francesca's hand remained
Still by the church's bonds unchained:
And when the Adriatic bore
Lanciotto to the Paynim shore,
Her wonted smiles were seen to fail, 155
And pensive waxed the maid and pale;
More constant at confessional,
More rare at masque and festival;
Or seen at such, with downcast eyes,
Which conquered hearts they ceased to prize: 160
With listless look she seems to gaze;
With humbler care her form arrays;
Her voice less lively in the song;
Her step, though light, less fleet among
The pairs, on whom the Morning's glance 165
Breaks, yet unsated with the dance.

IX.

Sent by the state to guard the land,
(Which, wrested from the Moslem's hand,
While Sobieski tamed his pride
By Buda's wall and Danube's side, 170
The chiefs of Venice wrung away
From Patra to Eubœa's bay,)
Minotti held in Corinth's towers
The Doge's delegated powers,
While yet the pitying eye of Peace 175
Smiled o'er her long forgotten Greece:
And ere that faithless truce was broke
Which freed her from the unchristian yoke,
With him his gentle daughter came;
Nor there, since Menelaus' dame 180
Forsook her lord and land, to prove
What woes await on lawless love,
Had fairer form adorned the shore
Than she, the matchless stranger, bore.

X.

The wall is rent, the ruins yawn; 185
And, with to-morrow's earliest dawn,

O'er the disjointed mass shall vault
The foremost of the fierce assault.
The bands are ranked; the chosen van
Of Tartar and of Mussulman, 190
The full of hope, misnamed "forlorn,"
Who hold the thought of death in scorn,
And win their way with falchions' force,
Or pave the path with many a corse,
O'er which the following brave may rise, 195
Their stepping-stone—the last who dies!

XI.

'Tis midnight: on the mountain's brown
The cold, round moon shines deeply down;
Blue roll the waters, blue the sky
Spreads like an ocean hung on high, 200
Bespangled with those isles of light,
So wildly, spiritually bright;
Who ever gazed upon them shining,
And turned to earth without repining,
Nor wished for wings to flee away, 205
And mix with their eternal ray?
The waves on either shore lay there
Calm, clear, and azure as the air;

And scarce their foam the pebbles shook,
But murmured meekly as the brook. 210
The winds were pillowed on the waves;
The banners drooped along their staves,
And, as they fell around them furling,
Above them shone the crescent curling;
And that deep silence was unbroke, 215
Save where the watch his signal spoke,
Save where the steed neighed oft and shrill,
And echo answered from the hill,
And the wide hum of that wild host
Rustled like leaves from coast to coast, 220
As rose the Muezzin's voice in air
In midnight call to wonted prayer;
It rose, that chaunted mournful strain,
Like some lone spirit's o'er the plain:
'Twas musical, but sadly sweet, 225
Such as when winds and harp-strings meet,
And take a long unmeasured tone,
To mortal minstrelsy unknown.
It seemed to those within the wall
A cry prophetic of their fall: 230
It struck even the besieger's ear
With something ominous and drear,

An undefined and sudden thrill,
Which makes the heart a moment still,
Then beat with quicker pulse, ashamed 235
Of that strange sense it's silence framed;
Such as a sudden passing-bell
Wakes, though but for a stranger's knell.

XII.

The tent of Alp was on the shore;
The sound was hushed, the prayer was o'er; 240
The watch was set, the night-round made,
All mandates issued and obeyed:
'Tis but another anxious night,
His pains the morrow may requite
With all revenge and love can pay, 245
In guerdon for their long delay.
Few hours remain, and he hath need
Of rest, to nerve for many a deed
Of slaughter; but within his soul
The thoughts like troubled waters roll. 250
He stood alone among the host;
Not his the loud fanatic boast
To plant the crescent o'er the cross,
Or risk a life with little loss,

Secure in paradise to be 255
By Houris loved immortally:
Nor his, what burning patriots feel,
The stern exaltedness of zeal,
Profuse of blood, untired in toil,
When battling on the parent soil. 260
He stood alone—a renegade
Against the country he betrayed;
He stood alone amidst his band,
Without a trusted heart or hand:
They followed him, for he was brave, 265
And great the spoil he got and gave;
They crouched to him, for he had skill
To warp and wield the vulgar will:
But still his Christian origin
With them was little less than sin. 270
They envied even the faithless fame
He earned beneath a Moslem name;
Since he, their mightiest chief, had been
In youth a bitter Nazarene.
They did not know how pride can stoop, 275
When baffled feelings withering droop;
They did not know how hate can burn
In hearts once changed from soft to stern;

Nor all the false and fatal zeal
The convert of revenge can feel. 280
He ruled them—man may rule the worst,
By ever daring to be first:
So lions o'er the jackal sway;
The jackal points, he fells the prey,
Then on the vulgar yelling press, 285
To gorge the relics of success.

XIII.

His head grows fevered, and his pulse
The quick successive throbs convulse;
In vain from side to side he throws
His form, in-courtship of repose; 290
Or if he dozed, a sound, a start
Awoke him with a sunken heart.
The turban on his hot brow pressed,
The mail weighed lead-like on his breast,
Though oft and long beneath its weight 295
Upon his eyes had slumber sate,
Without or couch or canopy,
Except a rougher field and sky
Than now might yield a warrior's bed,
Than now along the heaven was spread. 300

He could not rest, he could not stay
Within his tent to wait for day,
But walked him forth along the sand,
Where thousand sleepers strewed the strand.
What pillowed them? and why should he 305
More wakeful than the humblest be?
Since more their peril, worse their toil,
And yet they fearless dream of spoil;
While he alone, where thousands passed
A night of sleep, perchance their last, 310
In sickly vigil wandered on,
And envied all he gazed upon.

XIV.

He felt his soul become more light
Beneath the freshness of the night.
Cool was the silent sky, though calm, 315
And bathed his brow with airy balm:
Behind, the camp—before him lay,
In many a winding creek and bay,
Lepanto's gulf; and, on the brow
Of Delphi's hill, unshaken snow, 320
High and eternal, such as shone
Through thousand summers brightly gone,

Along the gulf, the mount, the clime;
It will not melt, like man, to time:
Tyrant and slave are swept away, 325
Less formed to wear before the ray;
But that white veil, the lightest, frailest,
Which on the mighty mount thou hailest,
While tower and tree are torn and rent,
Shines o'er its craggy battlement; 330
In form a peak, in height a cloud,
In texture like a hovering shroud,
Thus high by parting Freedom spread,
As from her fond abode she fled,
And lingered on the spot, where long 335
Her prophet spirit spake in song.
Oh, still her step at moments falters
O'er withered fields, and ruined altars,
And fain would wake, in souls too broken,
By pointing to each glorious token. 340
But vain her voice, till better days
Dawn in those yet remembered rays
Which shone upon the Persian flying,
And saw the Spartan smile in dying.

XV.

Not mindless of these mighty times 345
Was Alp, despite his flight and crimes;
And through this night, as on he wandered,
And o'er the past and present pondered,
And thought upon the glorious dead
Who there in better cause had bled, 350
He felt how faint and feebly dim
The fame that could accrue to him,
Who cheered the band, and waved the sword,
A traitor in a turbaned horde;
And led them to the lawless siege, 355
Whose best success were sacrilege.
Not so had those his fancy numbered,
The chiefs whose dust around him slumbered;
Their phalanx marshalled on the plain,
Whose bulwarks were not then in vain. 360
They fell devoted, but undying;
The very gale their names seemed sighing:
The waters murmured of their name;
The woods were peopled with their fame;
The silent pillar, lone and gray, 365
Claimed kindred with their sacred clay;

Their spirits wrapt the dusky mountain,
Their memory sparkled o'er the fountain;
The meanest rill, the mightiest river
Rolled mingling with their fame for ever. 370
Despite of every yoke she bears,
That land is glory's still and theirs!
'Tis still a watch-word to the earth.
When man would do a deed of worth,
He points to Greece, and turns to tread, 375
So sanctioned, on the tyrant's head:
He looks to her, and rushes on
Where life is lost, or freedom won.

XVI.

Still by the shore Alp mutely mused,
And wooed the freshness Night diffused. 380
There shrinks no ebb in that tideless sea [3],
Which changeless rolls eternally;
So that wildest of waves, in their angriest mood,
Scarce break on the bounds of the land for a rood;
And the powerless moon beholds them flow, 385
Heedless if she come or go:
Calm or high, in main or bay,
On their course she hath no sway.

The rock unworn its base doth bare,
And looks o'er the surf, but it comes not there; 390
And the fringe of the foam may be seen below,
On the line that it left long ages ago:
A smooth short space of yellow sand
Between it and the greener land.

He wandered on, along the beach, 395
Till within the range of a carbine's reach
Of the leaguered wall; but they saw him not,
Or how could he 'scape from the hostile shot?
Did traitors lurk in the Christians' hold?
Were their hands grown stiff, or their hearts waxed cold? 400
I know not, in sooth; but from yonder wall
There flashed no fire, and there hissed no ball,
Though he stood beneath the bastion's frown,
That flanked the sea-ward gate of the town;
Though he heard the sound, and could almost tell
The sullen words of the sentinel, 406
As his measured step on the stone below
Clanked, as he paced it to and fro;
And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall
Hold o'er the dead their carnival, 410

Gorging and growling o'er carcase and limb;
They were too busy to bark at him!
From a Tartar's skull they had stripped the flesh,
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh; 414
And their white tusks crunched o'er the whiter skull[4],
As it slipped through their jaws, when their edge grew dull,
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed;
So well had they broken a lingering fast
With those who had fallen for that night's repast. 420
And Alp knew, by the turbans that rolled on the sand,
The foremost of these were the best of his band:
Crimson and green were the shawls of their wear,
And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair[5],
All the rest was shaven and bare. 425
The scalps were in the wild dog's maw,
The hair was tangled round his jaw.
But close by the shore, on the edge of the gulf,
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf,
Who had stolen from the hills, but kept away, 430
Scared by the dogs, from the human prey;

But he seized on his share of a steed that lay,
Picked by the birds, on the sands of the bay.

XVII.

Alp turned him from the sickening sight:
Never had shaken his nerves in fight; 435
But he better could brook to behold the dying,
Deep in the tide of their warm blood lying,
Scorched with the death-thirst, and writhing in vain,
Than the perishing dead who are past all pain.
There is something of pride in the perilous hour, 440
Whate'er be the shape in which death may lower;
For Fame is there to say who bleeds,
And Honour's eye on daring deeds!
But when all is past, it is humbling to tread
O'er the weltering field of the tombless dead, 445
And see worms of the earth, and fowls of the air,
Beasts of the forest, all gathering there;
All regarding man as their prey,
All rejoicing in his decay.

XVIII.

There is a temple in ruin stands, 450
Fashioned by long forgotten hands;

Two or three columns, and many a stone,
Marble and granite, with grass o'ergrown!
Out upon Time! it will leave no more
Of the things to come than the things before! 455
Out upon Time! who for ever will leave
But enough of the past for the future to grieve
O'er that which hath been, and o'er that which must be:
What we have seen, our sons shall see;
Remnants of things that have passed away, 460
Fragments of stone, reared by creatures of clay!

XIX.

He sate him down at a pillar's base,
And passed his hand athwart his face;
Like one in dreary musing mood,
Declining was his attitude; 465
His head was drooping on his breast,
Fevered, throbbing, and opprest;
And o'er his brow, so downward bent,
Oft his beating fingers went,
Hurriedly, as you may see 470
Your own run over the ivory key,
Ere the measured tone is taken
By the chords you would awaken.

There he sate all heavily,
As he heard the night-wind sigh. 475
Was it the wind, through some hollow stone[6],
Sent that soft and tender moan?
He lifted his head, and he looked on the sea,
But it was unrippled as glass may be;
He looked on the long grass—it waved not a blade;
How was that gentle sound conveyed? 481
He looked to the banners—each flag lay still,
So did the leaves on Cithæron's hill,
And he felt not a breath come over his cheek;
What did that sudden sound bespeak? 485
He turned to the left—is he sure of sight?
There sate a lady, youthful and bright!

XX.

He started up with more of fear
Than if an armed foe were near.
"God of my fathers! what is here? 490
"Who art thou, and wherefore sent
"So near a hostile armament?"
His trembling hands refused to sign
The cross he deemed no more divine:

He had resumed it in that hour, 495
But conscience wrung away the power.
He gazed, he saw: he knew the face
Of beauty, and the form of grace;
It was Francesca by his side,
The maid who might have been his bride! 500

The rose was yet upon her cheek,
But mellowed with a tenderer streak:
Where was the play of her soft lips fled?
Gone was the smile that enlivened their red.
The ocean's calm within their view, 505
Beside her eye had less of blue;
But like that cold wave it stood still,
And its glance, though clear, was chill.
Around her form a thin robe twining,
Nought concealed her bosom shining; 510
Through the parting of her hair,
Floating darkly downward there,
Her rounded arm showed white and bare:
And ere yet she made reply,
Once she raised her hand on high; 515
It was so wan, and transparent of hue,
You might have seen the moon shine through.

XXI.

"I come from my rest to him I love best,
"That I may be happy, and he may be blest.
"I have passed the guards, the gate, the wall; 520
"Sought thee in safety through foes and all.
"'Tis said the lion will turn and flee
"From a maid in the pride of her purity;
"And the Power on high, that can shield the good
"Thus from the tyrant of the wood, 525
"Hath extended its mercy to guard me as well
"From the hands of the leaguering infidel.
"I come—and if I come in vain,
"Never, oh never, we meet again!
"Thou hast done a fearful deed 530
"In falling away from thy father's creed:
"But dash that turban to earth, and sign
"The sign of the cross, and for ever be mine;
"Wring the black drop from thy heart,
"And to-morrow unites us no more to part." 535

"And where should our bridal couch be spread?
"In the 'midst of the dying and the dead?

"For to-morrow we give to the slaughter and flame
"The sons and the shrines of the Christian name.
"None, save thou and thine, I've sworn 540
"Shall be left upon the morn:
"But thee will I bear to a lovely spot,
"Where our hands shall be joined, and our sorrow forgot.
"There thou yet shalt be my bride,
"When once again I've quelled the pride 545
"Of Venice; and her hated race
"Have felt the arm they would debase
"Scourge, with a whip of scorpions, those
"Whom vice and envy made my foes."

Upon his hand she laid her own— 550
Light was the touch, but it thrilled to the bone,
And shot a chillness to his heart,
Which fixed him beyond the power to start.
Though slight was that grasp so mortal cold,
He could not loose him from its hold; 555
But never did clasp of one so dear
Strike on the pulse with such feeling of fear,
As those thin fingers, long and white,
Froze through his blood by their touch that night.

The feverish glow of his brow was gone, 560
And his heart sank so still that it felt like stone,
As he looked on the face, and beheld its hue
So deeply changed from what he knew:
Fair but faint—without the ray
Of mind, that made each feature play 565
Like sparkling waves on a sunny day;
And her motionless lips lay still as death,
And her words came forth without her breath,
And there rose not a heave o'er her bosom's swell,
And there seemed not a pulse in her veins to dwell.
Though her eye shone out, yet the lids were fixed, 571
And the glance that it gave was wild and unmixed
With aught of change, as the eyes may seem
Of the restless who walk in a troubled dream;
Like the figures on arras, that gloomily glare 575
Stirred by the breath of the wintry air,
So seen by the dying lamp's fitful light,
Lifeless, but life-like, and awful to sight;
As they seem, through the dimness, about to come down
From the shadowy wall where their images frown;

Fearfully flitting to and fro, 581
As the gusts on the tapestry come and go.

" If not for love of me be given
" Thus much, then, for the love of heaven,—
" Again I say—that turban tear 585
" From off thy faithless brow, and swear
" Thine injured country's sons to spare,
" Or thou art lost; and never shalt see
" Not earth—that's past—but heaven or me.
" If this thou dost accord, albeit 590
" A heavy doom 'tis thine to meet,
" That doom shall half absolve thy sin,
" And mercy's gate may receive thee within:
" But pause one moment more, and take
" The curse of him thou didst forsake; 595
" And look once more to heaven, and see
" Its love for ever shut from thee.
" There is a light cloud by the moon—[7]
" 'Tis passing, and will pass full soon—
" If, by the time its vapoury sail 600
" Hath ceased her shaded orb to veil,
" Thy heart within thee is not changed,
" Then God and man are both avenged;

"Dark will thy doom be, darker still
"Thine immortality of ill."

Alp looked to heaven, and saw on high
The sign she spake of in the sky;
But his heart was swollen, and turned aside,
By deep interminable pride.
This first false passion of his breast
Rolled like a torrent o'er the rest.
He sue for mercy! *He* dismayed
By wild words of a timid maid!
He, wronged by Venice, vow to save
Her sons, devoted to the grave!
No—though that cloud were thunder's worst,
And charged to crush him—let it burst!

He looked upon it earnestly,
Without an accent of reply;
He watched it passing; it is flown:
Full on his eye the clear moon shone,
And thus he spake—"Whate'er my fate,
"I am no changeling—'tis too late:
"The reed in storms may bow and quiver,
"Then rise again; the tree must shiver.

" What Venice made me, I must be,
" Her foe in all, save love to thee:
" But thou art safe: oh, fly with me!"
He turned, but she is gone!
Nothing is there but the column stone. 630
Hath she sunk in the earth, or melted in air?
He saw not, he knew not; but nothing is there.

XXII.

The night is past, and shines the sun
As if that morn were a jocund one.
Lightly and brightly breaks away 635
The Morning from her mantle grey,
And the Noon will look on a sultry day.
Hark to the trump, and the drum,
And the mournful sound of the barbarous horn, 639
And the flap of the banners, that flit as they're borne,
And the neigh of the steed, and the multitude's hum,
And the clash, and the shout, 'they come, they come!'
The horsetails[8] are plucked from the ground, and the sword
From its sheath; and they form, and but wait for the word.

Tartar, and Spahi, and Turcoman, 645
Strike your tents, and throng to the van;
Mount ye, spur ye, skirr the plain,
That the fugitive may flee in vain,
When he breaks from the town; and none escape,
Aged or young, in the Christian shape; 650
While your fellows on foot, in a fiery mass,
Bloodstain the breach through which they pass.
The steeds are all bridled, and snort to the rein;
Curved is each neck, and flowing each mane;
White is the foam of their champ on the bit: 655
The spears are uplifted; the matches are lit;
The cannon are pointed, and ready to roar,
And crush the wall they have crumbled before:
Forms in his phalanx each Janizar;
Alp at their head; his right arm is bare, 660
So is the blade of his scimitar;
The khan and the pachas are all at their post;
The vizier himself at the head of the host.
When the culverin's signal is fired, then on;
Leave not in Corinth a living one— 665
A priest at her altars, a chief in her halls,
A hearth in her mansions, a stone on her walls.

God and the prophet—Alla Hu!
Up to the skies with that wild halloo!
"There the breach lies for passage, the ladder to scale; 670
"And your hands on your sabres, and how should ye fail?
"He who first downs with the red cross may crave
"His heart's dearest wish; let him ask it, and have!"
Thus uttered Coumourgi, the dauntless vizier;
The reply was the brandish of sabre and spear, 675
And the shout of fierce thousands in joyous ire:—
Silence—hark to the signal—fire!

XXIII.

As the wolves, that headlong go
On the stately buffalo,
Though with fiery eyes, and angry roar, 680
And hoofs that stamp, and horns that gore,
He tramples on earth, or tosses on high
The foremost, who rush on his strength but to die:
Thus against the wall they went,
Thus the first were backward bent; 685
Many a bosom, sheathed in brass,
Strewed the earth like broken glass,

Shivered by the shot, that tore
The ground whereon they moved no more:
Even as they fell, in files they lay, 690
Like the mower's grass at the close of day,
When his work is done on the levelled plain;
Such was the fall of the foremost slain.

XXIV.

As the spring-tides, with heavy plash,
From the cliffs invading dash 695
Huge fragments, sapped by the ceaseless flow,
Till white and thundering down they go,
Like the avalanche's snow
On the Alpine vales below;
Thus at length, outbreathed and worn, 700
Corinth's sons were downward borne
By the long and oft renewed
Charge of the Moslem multitude.
In firmness they stood, and in masses they fell,
Heaped, by the host of the infidel, 705
Hand to hand, and foot to foot:
Nothing there, save death, was mute;
Stroke, and thrust, and flash, and cry
For quarter, or for victory,

Mingle there with the volleying thunder, 710
Which makes the distant cities wonder
How the sounding battle goes,
If with them, or for their foes;
If they must mourn, or may rejoice
In that annihilating voice, 715
Which pierces the deep hills through and through
With an echo dread and new:
You might have heard it, on that day,
O'er Salamis and Megara;
(We have heard the hearers say,) 720
Even unto Piræus bay.

XXV.

From the point of encountering blades to the hilt,
Sabres and swords with blood were gilt:
But the rampart is won, and the spoil begun,
And all but the after carnage done. 725
Shriller shrieks now mingling come
From within the plundered dome:
Hark to the haste of flying feet,
That splash in the blood of the slippery street;
But here and there, where 'vantage ground 730
Against the foe may still be found,

Desperate groups, of twelve or ten,
Make a pause, and turn again—
With banded backs against the wall,
Fiercely stand, or fighting fall. 735

There stood an old man—his hairs were white,
But his veteran arm was full of might:
So gallantly bore he the brunt of the fray,
The dead before him, on that day,
In a semicircle lay; 740
Still he combated unwounded,
Though retreating, unsurrounded.
Many a scar of former fight
Lurked beneath his corslet bright;
But of every wound his body bore, 745
Each and all had been ta'en before:
Though aged he was, so iron of limb,
Few of our youth could cope with him;
And the foes, whom he singly kept at bay,
Outnumbered his thin hairs of silver gray. 750
From right to left his sabre swept:
Many an Othman mother wept
Sons that were unborn, when dipped

His weapon first in Moslem gore,
Ere his years could count a score. 755
Of all he might have been the sire
Who fell that day beneath his ire:
For, sonless left long years ago,
His wrath made many a childless foe;
And since the day, when in the strait[9] 760
His only boy had met his fate,
His parent's iron hand did doom
More than a human hecatomb.
If shades by carnage be appeased,
Patroclus' spirit less was pleased 765
Than his, Minotti's son, who died
Where Asia's bounds and ours divide.
Buried he lay, where thousands before
For thousands of years were inhumed on the shore:
What of them is left, to tell 770
Where they lie, and how they fell?
Not a stone on their turf, nor a bone in their graves;
But they live in the verse that immortally saves.

XXVI.

Hark to the Allah shout! a band
Of the Mussulman bravest and best is at hand: 775

Their leader's nervous arm is bare,
Swifter to smite, and never to spare—
Unclothed to the shoulder it waves them on;
Thus in the fight is he ever known:
Others a gaudier garb may show, 780
To tempt the spoil of the greedy foe;
Many a hand's on a richer hilt,
But none on a steel more ruddily gilt;
Many a loftier turban may wear,—
Alp is but known by the white arm bare; 785
Look through the thick of the fight, 'tis there!
There is not a standard on that shore
So well advanced the ranks before;
There is not a banner in Moslem war
Will lure the Delhis half so far; 790
It glances like a falling star!
Where'er that mighty arm is seen,
The bravest be, or late have been;
There the craven cries for quarter
Vainly to the vengeful Tartar; 795
Or the hero, silent lying,
Scorns to yield a groan in dying;
Mustering his last feeble blow
'Gainst the nearest levelled foe,

Though faint beneath the mutual wound, 800
Grappling on the gory ground.

XXVII.

Still the old man stood erect,
And Alp's career a moment checked.
" Yield thee, Minotti; quarter take,
" For thine own, thy daughter's sake." 805

" Never, renegado, never!
" Though the life of thy gift would last for ever."

" Francesca!—Oh my promised bride!
" Must she too perish by thy pride?"

" She is safe."—" Where? where?"—" In heaven; 810
" From whence thy traitor soul is driven—
" Far from thee, and undefiled."
Grimly then Minotti smiled,
As he saw Alp staggering bow
Before his words, as with a blow. 815
" Oh God! when died she?"—" Yesternight—
" Nor weep I for her spirit's flight:

" None of my pure race shall be
" Slaves to Mahomet and thee—
" Come on!"—That challenge is in vain— 820
Alp's already with the slain!
While Minotti's words were wreaking
More revenge in bitter speaking
Than his falchion's point had found;
Had the time allowed to wound, 825
From within the neighbouring porch
Of a long defended church,
Where the last and desperate few
Would the failing fight renew,
The sharp shot dashed Alp to the ground; 830
Ere an eye could view the wound
That crashed through the brain of the infidel,
Round he spun, and down he fell;
A flash like fire within his eyes
Blazed, as he bent no more to rise, 835
And then eternal darkness sunk
Through all the palpitating trunk;
Nought of life left, save a quivering
Where his limbs were slightly shivering:
They turned him on his back; his breast 840
And brow were stained with gore and dust,

And through his lips the life-blood oozed,
From its deep veins lately loosed;
But in his pulse there was no throb,
Nor on his lips one dying sob; 845
Sigh, nor word, nor struggling breath
Heralded his way to death:
Ere his very thought could pray,
Unanealed he passed away,
Without a hope from mercy's aid,— 850
To the last a renegade.

XXVIII.

Fearfully the yell arose
Of his followers, and his foes;
These in joy, in fury those:
Then again in conflict mixing, 855
Clashing swords, and spears transfixing,
Interchanged the blow and thrust,
Hurling warriors in the dust.
Street by street, and foot by foot,
Still Minotti dares dispute 860
The latest portion of the land
Left beneath his high command;

With him, aiding heart and hand,
The remnant of his gallant band.
Still the church is tenable, 865
  Whence issued late the fated ball
  That half avenged the city's fall,
When Alp, her fierce assailant, fell:
Thither bending sternly back,
They leave before a bloody track; 870
And, with their faces to the foe,
Dealing wounds with every blow,
The chief, and his retreating train,
Join to those within the fane:
There they yet may breathe awhile, 875
Sheltered by the massy pile.

XXIX.

Brief breathing-time! the turbaned host,
With added ranks and raging boast,
Press onwards with such strength and heat,
Their numbers balk their own retreat; 880
For narrow the way that led to the spot
Where still the Christians yielded not;
And the foremost, if fearful, may vainly try
Through the massy column to turn and fly;
They perforce must do or die. 885

They die; but ere their eyes could close
Avengers o'er their bodies rose;
Fresh and furious, fast they fill
The ranks unthinned, though slaughtered still;
And faint the weary Christians wax 890
Before the still renewed attacks:
And now the Othmans gain the gate;
Still resists its iron weight,
And still, all deadly aimed and hot,
From every crevice comes the shot; 895
From every shattered window pour
The volleys of the sulphurous shower:
But the portal wavering grows and weak—
The iron yields, the hinges creak—
It bends—it falls—and all is o'er; 900
Lost Corinth may resist no more!

XXX.

Darkly, sternly, and all alone,
Minotti stood o'er the altar stone:
Madonna's face upon him shone,
Painted in heavenly hues above, 905
With eyes of light and looks of love;

And placed upon that holy shrine
To fix our thoughts on things divine,
When pictured there, we kneeling see
Her, and the boy-God on her knee, 910
Smiling sweetly on each prayer
To heaven, as if to waft it there.
Still she smiled; even now she smiles,
Though slaughter streams along her aisles:
Minotti lifted his aged eye, 915
And made the sign of a cross with a sigh,
Then seized a torch which blazed thereby;
And still he stood, while, with steel and flame,
Inward and onward the Mussulman came.

XXXI.

The vaults beneath the mosaic stone 920
Contained the dead of ages gone;
Their names were on the graven floor,
But now illegible with gore;
The carved crests, and curious hues
The varied marble's veins diffuse, 925
Were smeared, and slippery—stained, and strown
With broken swords, and helms o'erthrown:

There were dead above, and the dead below
Lay cold in many a coffined row;
You might see them piled in sable state, 930
By a pale light through a gloomy grate;
But War had entered their dark caves,
And stored along the vaulted graves
Her sulphurous treasures, thickly spread
In masses by the fleshless dead: 935
Here, throughout the siege, had been
The Christians' chiefest magazine;
To these a late formed train now led,
Minotti's last and stern resource
Against the foe's o'erwhelming force. 940

XXXII.

The foe came on, and few remain
To strive, and those must strive in vain:
For lack of further lives, to slake
The thirst of vengeance now awake,
With barbarous blows they gash the dead, 945
And lop the already lifeless head,
And fell the statues from their niche,
And spoil the shrines of offerings rich,

And from each other's rude hands wrest
The silver vessels saints had blessed. 950
To the high altar on they go;
Oh, but it made a glorious show!
On its table still behold
The cup of consecrated gold;
Massy and deep, a glittering prize, 955
Brightly it sparkles to plunderers' eyes:
That morn it held the holy wine,
Converted by Christ to his blood so divine,
Which his worshippers drank at the break of day,
To shrive their souls ere they joined in the fray. 960
Still a few drops within it lay;
And round the sacred table glow
Twelve lofty lamps, in splendid row,
From the purest metal cast;
A spoil—the richest, and the last. 965

XXXIII.

So near they came, the nearest stretched
To grasp the spoil he almost reached,
When old Minotti's hand
Touched with the torch the train—
'Tis fired! 970

Spire, vaults, the shrine, the spoil, the slain,
The turbaned victors, the Christian band,
All that of living or dead remain,
Hurled on high with the shivered fane,
In one wild roar expired! 975
The shattered town—the walls thrown down—
The waves a moment backward bent—
The hills that shake, although unrent,
As if an earthquake passed—
The thousand shapeless things all driven 980
In cloud and flame athwart the heaven,
By that tremendous blast—
Proclaimed the desperate conflict o'er
On that too long afflicted shore:
Up to the sky like rockets go 985
All that mingled there below:
Many a tall and goodly man,
Scorched and shrivelled to a span,
When he fell to earth again
Like a cinder strewed the plain: 990
Down the ashes shower like rain;
Some fell in the gulf, which received the sprinkles
With a thousand circling wrinkles;

Some fell on the shore, but, far away,
Scattered o'er the isthmus lay; 995
Christian or Moslem, which be they?
Let their mothers see and say!
When in cradled rest they lay,
And each nursing mother smiled
On the sweet sleep of her child, 1000
Little deemed she such a day
Would rend those tender limbs away.
Not the matrons that them bore
Could discern their offspring more;
That one moment left no trace 1005
More of human form or face
Save a scattered scalp or bone:
And down came blazing rafters, strown
Around, and many a falling stone,
Deeply dinted in the clay, 1010
All blackened there and reeking lay.
All the living things that heard
That deadly earth shock disappeared:
The wild birds flew; the wild dogs fled,
And howling left the unburied dead; 1015
The camels from their keepers broke;
The distant steer forsook the yoke—

The nearer steed plunged o'er the plain,
And burst his girth, and tore his rein;
The bull-frog's note, from out the marsh, 1020
Deep-mouthed arose, and doubly harsh;
The wolves yelled on the caverned hill,
Where echo rolled in thunder still;
The jackal's troop, in gathered cry,[20]
Bayed from afar complainingly, 1025
With a mixed and mournful sound,
Like crying babe, and beaten hound:
With sudden wing, and ruffled breast,
The eagle left his rocky nest,
And mounted nearer to the sun, 1030
The clouds beneath him seemed so dun;
Their smoke assailed his startled beak,
And made him higher soar and shriek—
Thus was Corinth lost and won!

NOTES.

Note 1, page 9, line 3.

The Turcoman hath left his herd.

The life of the Turcomans is wandering and patriarchal: they dwell in tents.

Note 2, page 11, line 17.

Coumourgi—he whose closing scene.

Ali Coumourgi, the favourite of three sultans, and Grand Vizier to Achmet III. after recovering Peloponnesus from the Venetians in one campaign, was mortally wounded in the next, against the Germans, at the battle of Peterwaradin, (in the plain of Carlowitz) in Hungary, endeavouring to rally his guards. He died of his wounds next day. His last order was the decapitation of General Breuner, and some other German prisoners; and his last words, "Oh that I could thus serve all the Christian dogs!" a speech and act not unlike one of Caligula. He was a young man of great ambition and unbounded presumption: on being told that Prince Eugene, then opposed to him, "was a great general," he said, "I shall become a greater, and at his expense."

Note 3, page 24, line 15.

There shrinks no ebb in that tideless sea.

The reader need hardly be reminded that there are no perceptible tides in the Mediterranean.

Note 4, page 26, line 5.

And their white tusks crunched o'er the whiter skull.

This spectacle I have seen, such as described, beneath the wall of the Seraglio at Constantinople, in the little cavities worn by the Bosphorus in the rock, a narrow terrace of which projects between the wall and the water. I think the fact is also mentioned in Hobhouse's Travels. The bodies were probably those of some refractory Janizaries.

Note 5, page 26, line 14.

And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair.

This tuft, or long lock, is left from a superstition that Mahomet will draw them into Paradise by it.

Note 6, page 29, line 3.

I must here acknowledge a close, though unintentional, resemblance in these twelve lines to a passage in an unpublished poem of Mr. Coleridge, called "Christabel." It was not till after these lines were written that I heard that wild and singularly original and beautiful poem recited; and the MS. of that production I never saw till very recently, by the kindness of Mr. Coleridge himself, who, I hope, is convinced that I have not been a wilful plagiarist. The original idea undoubtedly pertains to Mr. Coleridge, whose poem has been composed above fourteen years. Let me conclude by a hope that he will not longer delay the publication of a production. of which I can only add my mite of approbation to the applause of far more competent judges.

Note 7, page 34, line 18.

There is a light cloud by the moon—

I have been told that the idea expressed from lines 597 to

603 has been admired by those whose approbation is valuable. I am glad of it: but it is not original—at least not mine; it may be found much better expressed in pages 182-3-4 of the English version of "Vathek" (I forget the precise page of the French), a work to which I have before referred; and never recur to, or read, without a renewal of gratification.

Note 8, page 36, line 18.

The horsetails are plucked from the ground, and the sword.

The horsetail, fixed upon a lance, a Pasha's standard.

Note 9, page 42, line 7.

And since the day, when in the strait.

In the naval battle at the mouth of the Dardanelles, between the Venetians and the Turks.

Note 10, page 54, line 7.

The jackal's troop, in gathered cry.

I believe I have taken a poetical license to transplant the jackal from Asia. In Greece I never saw nor heard these animals; but among the ruins of Ephesus I have heard them by hundreds. They haunt ruins, and follow armies.

PARISINA.

TO

SCROPE BEARDMORE DAVIES, Esq.

THE FOLLOWING POEM

IS INSCRIBED

BY ONE WHO HAS LONG ADMIRED HIS TALENTS

AND VALUED HIS FRIENDSHIP.

Jan. 22, 1816.

The following poem is grounded on a circumstance mentioned in Gibbon's "Antiquities of the House of Brunswick."—I am aware, that in modern times the delicacy or fastidiousness of the reader may deem such subjects unfit for the purposes of poetry. The Greek dramatists, and some of the best of our old English writers, were of a different opinion: as Alfieri and Schiller have also been, more recently, upon the continent. The following extract will explain the facts on which the story is founded. The name of *Azo* is substituted for Nicholas, as more metrical.

"Under the reign of Nicholas III. Ferrara was polluted "with a domestic tragedy. By the testimony of an "attendant, and his own observation, the Marquis of "Este discovered the incestuous loves of his wife Pa-"risina, and Hugo his bastard son, a beautiful and "valiant youth. They were beheaded in the castle by "the sentence of a father and husband, who published "his shame, and survived their execution. He was "unfortunate, if they were guilty; if they were inno-"cent, he was still more unfortunate: nor is there any "possible situation in which I can sincerely approve the "last act of the justice of a parent."—*Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works*, vol. 3d. p. 470, new edition.

PARISINA.

I.

It is the hour when from the boughs
The nightingale's high note is heard;
It is the hour when lovers' vows
Seem sweet in every whisper'd word;
And gentle winds, and waters near, 5
Make music to the lonely ear.
Each flower the dews have lightly wet,
And in the sky the stars are met,
And on the wave is deeper blue,
And on the leaf a browner hue, 10
And in the heaven that clear obscure,
So softly dark, and darkly pure,
Which follows the decline of day,
As twilight melts beneath the moon away.[1]

II.

But it is not to list to the waterfall 15
That Parisina leaves her hall,
And it is not to gaze on the heavenly light
That the lady walks in the shadow of night;
And if she sits in Este's bower,
'Tis not for the sake of its full-blown flower— 20
She listens—but not for the nightingale—
Though her ear expects as soft a tale.
There glides a step through the foliage thick,
And her cheek grows pale—and her heart beats quick.
There whispers a voice through the rustling leaves,
And her blush returns, and her bosom heaves: 26
A moment more—and they shall meet—
'Tis past—her lover's at her feet.

III.

And what unto them is the world beside
With all its change of time and tide? 30
Its living things—its earth and sky—
Are nothing to their mind and eye.
And heedless as the dead are they
Of aught around, above, beneath;

As if all else had passed away, 35
They only for each other breathe;
Their very sighs are full of joy
So deep, that did it not decay,
That happy madness would destroy
The hearts which feel its fiery sway: 40
Of guilt, of peril, do they deem
In that tumultuous tender dream?
Who that have felt that passion's power,
Or paused, or feared in such an hour?
Or thought how brief such moments last: 45
But yet—they are already past!
Alas! we must awake before
We know such vision comes no more.

IV.

With many a lingering look they leave
The spot of guilty gladness past; 50
And though they hope, and vow, they grieve,
As if that parting were the last.
The frequent sigh—the long embrace—
The lip that there would cling for ever,
While gleams on Parisina's face 55
The Heaven she fears will not forgive her,

As if each calmly conscious star
Beheld her frailty from afar—
The frequent sigh, the long embrace,
Yet binds them to their trysting-place. 60
But it must come, and they must part
In fearful heaviness of heart,
With all the deep and shuddering chill
Which follows fast the deeds of ill.

V.

And Hugo is gone to his lonely bed, 65
To covet there another's bride;
But she must lay her conscious head
A husband's trusting heart beside.
But fevered in her sleep she seems,
And red her cheek with troubled dreams, 70
And mutters she in her unrest
A name she dare not breathe by day,
And clasps her Lord unto the breast
Which pants for one away:
And he to that embrace awakes, 75
And, happy in the thought, mistakes
That dreaming sigh, and warm caress,
For such as he was wont to bless;

And could in very fondness weep
O'er her who loves him even in sleep. 80

VI.

He clasped her sleeping to his heart,
And listened to each broken word:
He hears—Why doth Prince Azo start,
As if the Archangel's voice he heard?
And well he may—a deeper doom 85
Could scarcely thunder o'er his tomb,
When he shall wake to sleep no more,
And stand the eternal throne before.
And well he may—his earthly peace
Upon that sound is doomed to cease. 90
That sleeping whisper of a name
Bespeaks her guilt and Azo's shame.
And whose that name? that o'er his pillow
Sounds fearful as the breaking billow,
Which rolls the plank upon the shore, 95
And dashes on the pointed rock
The wretch who sinks to rise no more,—
So came upon his soul the shock.
And whose that name? 'tis Hugo's,—his—
In sooth he had not deemed of this!— 100

'Tis Hugo's,—he, the child of one
He loved—his own all-evil son—
The offspring of his wayward youth,
When he betrayed Bianca's truth,
The maid whose folly could confide 105
In him who made her not his bride.

VII.

He plucked his poignard in its sheath,
But sheathed it ere the point was bare—
Howe'er unworthy now to breathe,
He could not slay a thing so fair— 110
At least, not smiling—sleeping—there—
Nay, more:—he did not wake her then,
But gazed upon her with a glance
Which, had she roused her from her trance,
Had frozen her sense to sleep again— 115
And o'er his brow the burning lamp
Gleamed on the dew-drops big and damp.
She spake no more—but still she slumbered—
While, in his thought, her days are numbered.

VIII.

And with the morn he sought, and found, 120
In many a tale from those around,
The proof of all he feared to know,
Their present guilt, his future woe;
The long-conniving damsels seek
To save themselves, and would transfer 125
The guilt—the shame—the doom—to her:
Concealment is no more—they speak
All circumstance which may compel
Full credence to the tale they tell:
And Azo's tortured heart and ear 130
Have nothing more to feel or hear.

IX.

He was not one who brooked delay:
Within the chamber of his state,
The chief of Este's ancient sway
Upon his throne of judgment sate; 135
His nobles and his guards are there,—
Before him is the sinful pair;
Both young,—and *one* how passing fair!

With swordless belt, and fettered hand,
Oh, Christ! that thus a son should stand 140
Before a father's face!
Yet thus must Hugo meet his sire,
And hear the sentence of his ire,
The tale of his disgrace!
And yet he seems not overcome, 145
Although, as yet, his voice be dumb.

X.

And still, and pale, and silently
Did Parisina wait her doom;
How changed since last her speaking eye
Glanced gladness round the glittering room, 150
Where high-born men were proud to wait—
Where Beauty watched to imitate
Her gentle voice—her lovely mien—
And gather from her air and gait
The graces of it's queen: 155
Then,—had her eye in sorrow wept,
A thousand warriors forth had leapt,
A thousand swords had sheathless shone,
And made her quarrel all their own.

Now,—what is she? and what are they? 160
Can she command, or these obey?
All silent and unheeding now,
With downcast eyes and knitting brow,
And folded arms, and freezing air,
And lips that scarce their scorn forbear, 165
Her knights and dames, her court—is there:
And he, the chosen one, whose lance
Had yet been couched before her glance,
Who—were his arm a moment free—
Had died or gained her liberty; 170
The minion of his father's bride,—
He, too, is fettered by her side;
Nor sees her swoln and full eye swim
Less for her own despair than him:
Those lids o'er which the violet vein— 175
Wandering, leaves a tender stain,
Shining through the smoothest white
That e'er did softest kiss invite—
Now seemed with hot and livid glow
To press, not shade, the orbs below; 180
Which glance so heavily, and fill,
As tear on tear grows gathering still.

XI.

And he for her had also wept,
  But for the eyes that on him gazed:
His sorrow, if he felt it, slept; 185
  Stern and erect his brow was raised.
Whate'er the grief his soul avowed,
He would not shrink before the crowd;
But yet he dared not look on her:
Remembrance of the hours that were— 190
His guilt—his love—his present state—
His father's wrath—all good men's hate—
His earthly, his eternal fate—
And hers,—oh, hers!—he dared not throw
One look upon that deathlike brow! 195
Else had his rising heart betrayed
Remorse for all the wreck it made.

XII.

And Azo spake:—" But yesterday
  " I gloried in a wife and son;
" That dream this morning passed away; 2
  " Ere day declines, I shall have none.

" My life must linger on alone;
" Well,—let that pass,—there breathes not one
" Who would not do as I have done:
" Those ties are broken—not by me; 205
" Let that too pass;—the doom's prepared!
" Hugo, the priest awaits on thee,
" And then—thy crime's reward!
" Away! address thy prayers to Heaven,
" Before its evening stars are met— 210
" Learn if thou there canst be forgiven;
" It's mercy may absolve thee yet.
" But here, upon the earth beneath,
" There is no spot where thou and I
" Together; for an hour, could breathe: 215
" Farewell! I will not see thee die—
" But thou, frail thing! shalt view his head—
" Away! I cannot speak the rest:
" Go! woman of the wanton breast;
" Not I, but thou his blood dost shed: 220
" Go! if that sight thou canst outlive,
" And joy thee in the life I give."

XIII.

And here stern Azo hid his face—
For on his brow the swelling vein
Throbbed as if back upon his brain 225
The hot blood ebbed and flowed again;
And therefore bowed he for a space,
And passed his shaking hand along
His eye, to veil it from the throng;
While Hugo raised his chained hands, 230
And for a brief delay demands
His father's ear: the silent sire
Forbids not what his words require.

"It is not that I dread the death—
"For thou hast seen me by thy side 235
"All redly through the battle ride,
"And that not once a useless brand
"Thy slaves have wrested from my hand,
"Hath shed more blood in cause of thine,
"Than e'er can stain the axe of mine: 240
"Thou gav'st, and may'st resume my breath,
"A gift for which I thank thee not;
"Nor are my mother's wrongs forgot,

" Her slighted love and ruined name,
" Her offspring's heritage of shame; 245
" But she is in the grave, where he,
" Her son, thy rival, soon shall be.
" Her broken heart—my severed head—
" Shall witness for thee from the dead
" How trusty and how tender were 250
" Thy youthful love—paternal care.
" 'Tis true, that I have done thee wrong—
" But wrong for wrong—this deemed thy bride,
" The other victim of thy pride,
" Thou know'st for me was destined long. 255
" Thou saw'st, and coveted'st her charms—
" And with thy very crime—my birth,
" Thou taunted'st me—as little worth;
" A match ignoble for her arms,
" Because, forsooth, I could not claim 260
" The lawful heirship of thy name,
" Nor sit on Este's lineal throne:
" Yet, were a few short summers mine,
" My name should more than Este's shine
" With honours all my own. 265
" I had a sword—and have a breast
" That should have won as haught[2] a crest

"As ever waved along the line
"Of all these sovereign sires of thine.
"Not always knightly spurs are worn 270
"The brightest by the better born;
"And mine have lanced my courser's flank
"Before proud chiefs of princely rank,
"When charging to the cheering cry
"Of 'Este and of Victory!'" 275

"I will not plead the cause of crime,
"Nor sue thee to redeem from time
"A few brief hours or days that must
"At length roll o'er my reckless dust;—
"Such maddening moments as my past, 280
"They could not, and they did not, last—
"Albeit, my birth and name be base,
"And thy nobility of race
"Disdained to deck a thing like me—
"Yet in my lineaments they trace 285
"Some features of my father's face,
"And in my spirit—all of thee.
"From thee—this tamelessness of heart—
"From thee—nay, wherefore dost thou start?—

" From thee in all their vigour came 290
" My arm of strength, my soul of flame—
" Thou didst not give me life alone,
" But all that made me more thine own.
" See what thy guilty love hath done!
" Repaid thee with too like a son! 295
" I am no bastard in my soul,
" For that, like thine, abhorred controul:
" And for my breath, that hasty boon
" Thou gav'st and wilt resume so soon,
" I valued it no more than thou, 300
" When rose thy casque above thy brow,
" And we, all side by side, have striven,
" And o'er the dead our coursers driven:
" The past is nothing—and at last
" The future can but be the past; 305
" Yet would I that I then had died:
" For though thou work'dst my mother's ill,
" And made thy own my destined bride,
" I feel thou art my father still;
" And, harsh as sounds thy hard decree, 310
" 'Tis not unjust, although from thee.
" Begot in sin, to die in shame,
" My life begun and ends the same:

" As erred the sire, so erred the son—
" And thou must punish both in one. 315
" My crime seems worst to human view,
" But God must judge between us too!"

XIV.

He ceased—and stood with folded arms,
On which the circling fetters sounded;
And not an ear but felt as wounded, 320
Of all the chiefs that there were ranked,
When those dull chains in meeting clanked:
Till Parisina's fatal charms
Again attracted every eye—
Would she thus hear him doomed to die! 325
She stood, I said, all pale and still,
The living cause of Hugo's ill:
Her eyes unmoved, but full and wide,
Not once had turned to either side—
Nor once did those sweet eyelids close, 330
Or shade the glance o'er which they rose,
But round their orbs of deepest blue
The circling white dilated grew—
And there with glassy gaze she stood
As ice were in her curdled blood; 335

But every now and then a tear
So large and slowly gathered slid
From the long dark fringe of that fair lid,
It was a thing to see, not hear!
And those who saw, it did surprise, 340
Such drops could fall from human eyes.
To speak she thought—the imperfect note
Was choked within her swelling throat,
Yet seemed in that low hollow groan
Her whole heart gushing in the tone. 345
It ceased—again she thought to speak,
Then burst her voice in one long shriek,
And to the earth she fell like stone
Or statue from its base o'erthrown,
More like a thing that ne'er had life,— 350
A monument of Azo's wife,—
Than her, that living guilty thing,
Whose every passion was a sting,
Which urged to guilt, but could not bear
That guilt's detection and despair. 355
But yet she lived—and all too soon
Recovered from that death-like swoon—
But scarce to reason—every sense
Had been o'erstrung by pangs intense;

And each frail fibre of her brain 360
(As bow-strings, when relaxed by rain,
The erring arrow launch aside)
Sent forth her thoughts all wild and wide—
The past a blank, the future black,
With glimpses of a dreary track, 365
Like lightning on the desart path,
When midnight storms are mustering wrath.
She feared—she felt that something ill
Lay on her soul, so deep and chill—
That there was sin and shame she knew; 370
That some one was to die—but who?
She had forgotten:—did she breathe?
Could this be still the earth beneath?
The sky above, and men around;
Or were they fiends who now so frowned 375
On one, before whose eyes each eye
Till then had smiled in sympathy?
All was confused and undefined,
To her all-jarred and wandering mind;
A chaos of wild hopes and fears: 380
And now in laughter, now in tears,
But madly still in each extreme,
She strove with that convulsive dream;

For so it seemed on her to break:
Oh! vainly must she strive to wake! 385

XV.

The Convent bells are ringing,
But mournfully and slow;
In the grey square turret swinging,
With a deep sound, to and fro.
Heavily to the heart they go! 390
Hark! the hymn is singing—
The song for the dead below,
Or the living who shortly shall be so!
For a departing being's soul
The death-hymn peals and the hollow bells knoll:
He is near his mortal goal; 396
Kneeling at the Friar's knee;
Sad to hear—and piteous to see—
Kneeling on the bare cold ground,
With the block before and the guards around— 400
And the headsman with his bare arm ready,
That the blow may be both swift and steady,
Feels if the axe be sharp and true—
Since he set its edge anew:
While the crowd in a speechless circle gather 405
To see the Son fall by the doom of the Father.

XVI.

It is a lovely hour as yet
Before the summer sun shall set,
Which rose upon that heavy day,
And mocked it with his steadiest ray; 410
And his evening beams are shed
Full on Hugo's fated head,
As his last confession pouring
To the monk, his doom deploring
In penitential holiness, 415
He bends to hear his accents bless
With absolution such as may
Wipe our mortal stains away.
That high sun on his head did glisten
As he there did bow and listen— 420
And the rings of chesnut hair
Curled half down his neck so bare;
But brighter still the beam was thrown
Upon the axe which near him shone
With a clear and ghastly glitter—
Oh! that parting hour was bitter! 425
Even the stern stood chilled with awe:
Dark the crime, and just the law—
Yet they shuddered as they saw.

XVII.

The parting prayers are said and over
Of that false son—and daring lover! 430
His beads and sins are all recounted,
His hours to their last minute mounted—
His mantling cloak before was stripped,
His bright brown locks must now be clipped,
'Tis done—all closely are they shorn— 435
The vest which till this moment worn—
The scarf which Parisina gave—
Must not adorn him to the grave.
Even that must now be thrown aside,
And o'er his eyes the kerchief tied; 440
But no—that last indignity
Shall ne'er approach his haughty eye.
All feelings seemingly subdued,
In deep disdain were half renewed,
When headman's hands prepared to bind 445
Those eyes which would not brook such blind:
As if they dared not look on death.
"No—yours my forfeit blood and breath—
"These hands are chained—but let me die
"At least with an unshackled eye— 450

"Strike:"—and as the word he said,
Upon the block he bowed his head;
These the last accents Hugo spoke:
"Strike"—and flashing fell the stroke—
Rolled the head—and, gushing, sunk 455
Back the stained and heaving trunk,
In the dust, which each deep vein
Slaked with its ensanguined rain;
His eyes and lips a moment quiver,
Convulsed and quick—then fix for ever. 460

He died, as erring man should die,
Without display, without parade;
Meekly had he bowed and prayed,
As not disdaining priestly aid,
Nor desperate of all hope on high. 465
And while before the Prior kneeling,
His heart was weaned from earthly feeling;
His wrathful sire—his paramour—
What were they in such an hour?
No more reproach—no more despair; 470
No thought but heaven—no word but prayer—
Save the few which from him broke,
When, bared to meet the headman's stroke,

He claimed to die with eyes unbound,
His sole adieu to those around. 475

XVIII.

Still as the lips that closed in death,
Each gazer's bosom held his breath:
But yet, afar, from man to man,
A cold electric shiver ran,
As down the deadly blow descended 480
On him whose life and love thus ended;
And with a hushing sound comprest,
A sigh shrunk back on every breast;
But no more thrilling noise rose there,
Beyond the blow that to the block 485
Pierced through with forced and sullen shock,
Save one:—what cleaves the silent air
So madly shrill—so passing wild?
That, as a mother's o'er her child,
Done to death by sudden blow, 490
To the sky these accents go,
Like a soul's in endless woe.
Through Azo's palace-lattice driven,
That horrid voice ascends to heaven,

And every eye is turned thereon; 495
But sound and sight alike are gone!
It was a woman's shriek—and ne'er
In madlier accents rose despair;
And those who heard it, as it past,
In mercy wished it were the last. 500

XIX.

Hugo is fallen; and, from that hour,
No more in palace, hall, or bower,
Was Parisina heard or seen:
Her name—as if she ne'er had been—
Was banished from each lip and ear, 505
Like words of wantonness or fear;
And from Prince Azo's voice, by none
Was mention heard of wife or son;
No tomb—no memory had they;
Theirs was unconsecrated clay; 510
At least the knight's who died that day.
But Parisina's fate lies hid
Like dust beneath the coffin lid:
Whether in convent she abode,
And won to heaven her dreary road, 515

By blighted and remorseful years
Of scourge, and fast, and sleepless tears;
Or if she fell by bowl or steel,
For that dark love she dared to feel;
Or if, upon the moment smote, 520
She died by tortures less remote;
Like him she saw upon the block,
With heart that shared the headman's shock,
In quickened brokenness that came,
In pity, o'er her shattered frame, 525
None knew—and none can ever know
But whatsoe'er its end below,
Her life began and closed in woe!

XX.

And Azo found another bride,
And goodly sons grew by his side; 530
But none so lovely and so brave
As him who withered in the grave;
Or if they were—on his cold eye
Their growth but glanced unheeded by,
Or noticed with a smothered sigh. 535
But never tear his cheek descended,
And never smile his brow unbended;

And o'er that fair broad brow were wrought
The intersected lines of thought;
Those furrows which the burning share 540
Of Sorrow ploughs untimely there;
Scars of the lacerating mind
Which the Soul's war doth leave behind.
He was past all mirth or woe:
Nothing more remained below, 545
But sleepless nights and heavy days,
A mind all dead to scorn or praise,
A heart which shunned itself—and yet
That would not yield—nor could forget,
Which when it least appeared to melt, 550
Intently thought—intensely felt:
The deepest ice which ever froze
Can only o'er the surface close—
The living stream lies quick below,
And flows—and cannot cease to flow. 555
Still was his sealed-up bosom haunted
By thoughts which Nature hath implanted;
Too deeply rooted thence to vanish,
Howe'er our stifled tears we banish;
When, struggling as they rise to start, 560
We check those waters of the heart,

They are not dried—those tears unshed
But flow back to the fountain head,
And resting in their spring more pure,
For ever in its depth endure, 565
Unseen, unwept, but uncongealed,
And cherished most where least revealed.
With inward starts of feeling left,
To throb o'er those of life bereft;
Without the power to fill again 570
The desart gap which made his pain;
Without the hope to meet them where
United souls shall gladness share,
With all the consciousness that he
Had only passed a just decree; 575
That they had wrought their doom of ill,
Yet Azo's age was wretched still.
The tainted branches of the tree,
If lopped with care, a strength may give,
By which the rest shall bloom and live 580
All greenly fresh and wildly free.
But if the lightning, in its wrath,
The waving boughs with fury scathe,
The massy trunk the ruin feels,
And never more a leaf reveals. 585

NOTES.

Note 1, page 63, line 14.

As twilight melts beneath the moon away.

The lines contained in Section I. were printed as set to music some time since: but belonged to the poem where they now appear, the greater part of which was composed prior to "Lara" and other compositions since published.

Note 2, page 75, last line.

That should have won as haught a crest.

Haught—haughty—"Away *haught* man, thou art insulting me." *Shakspeare,* Richard II.

THE END.

T. DAVISON, Lombard-street,
Whitefriars, London.

3

THE

Prisoner of Chillon,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

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CONTENTS.

SONNET ON CHILLON.

Eternal spirit of the chainless mind!
  Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
  For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned—
  To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
  Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.

Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard![1]—May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

THE

PRISONER OF CHILLON.

A FABLE.

I.

My hair is grey, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,[2]
As men's have grown from sudden fears:
My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are bann'd, and barr'd—forbidden fare; 10
But this was for my father's faith
I suffered chains and courted death;

That father perish'd at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place;
We were seven—who now are one,
  Six in youth, and one in age,
Finish'd as they had begun,
  Proud of Persecution's rage; 20
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have seal'd;
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II.

There are seven pillars of gothic mold,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and grey,
Dim with a dull imprisoned ray, 30
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;

Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:
And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away, 40
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score,
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III.

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone,
We could not move a single pace, 50
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight;

And thus together—yet apart,
Fettered in hand, but pined in heart;
'Twas still some solace in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each,
With some new hope, or legend old, 60
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon-stone,
A grating sound—not full and free
As they of yore were wont to be:
It might be fancy—but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV.

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest 70
I ought to do—and did my best—
And each did well in his degree.

The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him—with eyes as blue as heaven,
For him my soul was sorely moved;
And truly might it be distrest
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day—
(When day was beautiful to me 80
As to young eagles, being free)—
A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for nought but others' ills,
And then they flowed like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe 90
Which he abhorr'd to view below.

V.

The other was as pure of mind,
But formed to combat with his kind;

Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perish'd in the foremost rank
With joy:—but not in chains to pine:
His spirit withered with their clank,
I saw it silently decline—
And so perchance in sooth did mine; 100
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had followed there the deer and wolf;
To him this dungeon was a gulf,
And fettered feet the worst of ills.

VI.

Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent 110
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,[3]
Which round about the wave enthralls:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made—and like a living grave.

Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
We heard it ripple night and day;
  Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd;
And I have felt the winter's spray 119
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky;
  And then the very rock hath rock'd,
  And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

VII.

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loath'd and put away his food;
It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunter's fare, 130
And for the like had little care:
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captive's tears
Have moisten'd many a thousand years,

Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den:
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mould 140
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side;
But why delay the truth?—he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died—and they unlocked his chain,
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave 150
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begg'd them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.

I might have spared my idle prayer—
They coldly laugh'd—and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above 160
The being we so much did love;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII.

But he, the favorite and the flower,
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyred father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be 170
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired—
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was withered on the stalk away.
Oh God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing

In any shape, in any mood:—
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean 180
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread:
But these were horrors—this was woe
Unmix'd with such—but sure and slow:
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender—kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom 190
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray—
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur—not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,

For I was sunk in silence—lost 200
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
I listened, but I could not hear—
I called, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonished;
I called, and thought I heard a sound—
I burst my chain with one strong bound, 210
And rush'd to him:—I found him not,
I only stirr'd in this black spot,
I only lived—*I* only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last—the sole—the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath—
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe: 220
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;

I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive—
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
    I know not why
    I could not die,
I had no earthly hope—but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death. 230

IX.

What next befell me then and there
I know not well—I never knew—
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling—none—
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and grey,
It was not night—it was not day, 240
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,

But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness—without a place;
There were no stars—no earth—no time—
No check—no change—no good—no crime—
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless! 250

X.

A light broke in upon my brain,—
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track, 260
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,

I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seem'd to say them all for me! 270
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seem'd like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine, 280
But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in winged guise,
A visitant from Paradise;

For—Heaven forgive that thought! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile;
I sometimes deemed that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 'twas mortal—well I knew, 290
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone,—
Lone—as the corse within its shroud,
Lone—as a solitary cloud,
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI.

A kind of change came in my fate, 300
My keepers grew compassionate,
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was:—my broken chain
With links unfasten'd did remain,

And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one, 310
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

XII.

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all, 320
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child—no sire—no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;

I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high, 330
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII.

I saw them—and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down; 340
And then there was a little isle,[4]
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,

But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
Of gentle breath and hue. 350
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seemed joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seemed to fly,
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled—and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode 360
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save,
And yet my glance, too much oppress't,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV.

It might be months, or years, or days,
  I kept no count—I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
  And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free, 370
  I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where,
It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to be,
  I learn'd to love despair.
And thus when they appear'd at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home: 380
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,

Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell—
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends 390
To make us what we are:—even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

SONNET.

Rousseau—Voltaire—our Gibbon—and de Staël—
[5] Leman! these names are worthy of thy shore,
Thy shore of names like these, wert thou no more,
Their memory thy remembrance would recall:
To them thy banks were lovely as to all,
But they have made them lovelier, for the lore
Of mighty minds doth hallow in the core
Of human hearts the ruin of a wall
Where dwelt the wise and wondrous; but by *thee*
How much more, Lake of Beauty! do we feel,
In sweetly gliding o'er thy crystal sea,
The wild glow of that not ungentle zeal,
Which of the heirs of immortality
Is proud, and makes the breath of glory real!

STANZAS TO ——.

I.

THOUGH the day of my destiny's over,
And the star of my fate hath declined,
Thy soft heart refused to discover
The faults which so many could find;
Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,
It shrunk not to share it with me,
And the love which my spirit hath painted
It never hath found but in *thee*.

II.

Then when nature around me is smiling
The last smile which answers to mine,
I do not believe it beguiling
Because it reminds me of thine;

And when winds are at war with the ocean,
  As the breasts I believed in with me,
If their billows excite an emotion
  It is that they bear me from *thee*.

III.

Though the rock of my last hope is shiver'd,
  And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
Though I feel that my soul is deliver'd
  To pain—it shall not be its slave.
There is many a pang to pursue me:
  They may crush, but they shall not contemn—
They may torture, but shall not subdue me—
  'Tis of *thee* that I think—not of them.

IV.

Though human, thou didst not deceive me,
  Though woman, thou didst not forsake,
Though loved, thou forborest to grieve me,
  Though slander'd, thou never could'st shake,—
Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me,
  Though parted, it was not to fly,

Though watchful, 'twas not to defame me,
Nor, mute, that the world might belie.

V.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,
Nor the war of the many with one—
If my soul was not fitted to prize it
'Twas folly not sooner to shun:
And if dearly that error hath cost me,
And more than I once could foresee,
I have found that, whatever it lost me,
It could not deprive me of *thee*.

VI.

From the wreck of the past, which hath perish'd,
Thus much I at least may recall,
It hath taught me that what I most cherish'd
Deserved to be dearest of all:
In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wide waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing,
Which speaks to my spirit of *thee*.

DARKNESS.

I HAD a dream, which was not all a dream.
The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;
Morn came, and went—and came, and brought no day,
And men forgot their passions in the dread
Of this their desolation; and all hearts
Were chill'd into a selfish prayer for light:
And they did live by watchfires—and the thrones,
The palaces of crowned kings—the huts,
The habitations of all things which dwell,
Were burnt for beacons; cities were consumed,

And men were gathered round their blazing homes
To look once more into each other's face;
Happy were those who dwelt within the eye
Of the volcanos, and their mountain-torch:
A fearful hope was all the world contain'd;
Forests were set on fire—but hour by hour
They fell and faded—and the crackling trunks
Extinguish'd with a crash—and all was black.
The brows of men by the despairing light
Wore an unearthly aspect, as by fits
The flashes fell upon them; some lay down
And hid their eyes and wept; and some did rest
Their chins upon their clenched hands, and smiled;
And others hurried to and fro, and fed
Their funeral piles with fuel, and looked up
With mad disquietude on the dull sky,
The pall of a past world; and then again
With curses cast them down upon the dust,
And gnash'd their teeth and howl'd: the wild birds shriek'd,
And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,
And flap their useless wings; the wildest brutes

Came tame and tremulous; and vipers crawl'd
And twined themselves among the multitude,
Hissing, but stingless—they were slain for food:
And War, which for a moment was no more,
Did glut himself again;—a meal was bought
With blood, and each sate sullenly apart
Gorging himself in gloom: no love was left;
All earth was but one thought—and that was death,
Immediate and inglorious; and the pang
Of famine fed upon all entrails—men
Died, and their bones were tombless as their flesh;
The meagre by the meagre were devoured,
Even dogs assail'd their masters, all save one,
And he was faithful to a corse, and kept
The birds and beasts and famish'd men at bay,
Till hunger clung them, or the dropping dead
Lured their lank jaws; himself sought out no food,
But with a piteous and perpetual moan
And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand
Which answered not with a caress—he died.
The crowd was famish'd by degrees; but two
Of an enormous city did survive,

And they were enemies; they met beside
The dying embers of an altar-place
Where had been heap'd a mass of holy things
For an unholy usage; they raked up,
And shivering scraped with their cold skeleton hands
The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath
Blew for a little life, and made a flame
Which was a mockery; then they lifted up
Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld
Each other's aspects—saw, and shriek'd, and died—
Even of their mutual hideousness they died,
Unknowing who he was upon whose brow
Famine had written Fiend. The world was void,
The populous and the powerful was a lump,
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless—
A lump of death—a chaos of hard clay.
The rivers, lakes, and ocean all stood still,
And nothing stirred within their silent depths;
Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea,
And their masts fell down piecemeal; as they dropp'd
They slept on the abyss without a surge—
The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave,

The moon their mistress had expired before;
The winds were withered in the stagnant air,
And the clouds perish'd; Darkness had no need
Of aid from them—She was the universe.

CHURCHILL'S GRAVE,

A FACT LITERALLY RENDERED.

I STOOD beside the grave of him who blazed
The comet of a season, and I saw
The humblest of all sepulchres, and gazed
With not the less of sorrow and of awe
On that neglected turf and quiet stone,
With name no clearer than the names unknown,
Which lay unread around it; and I ask'd
The Gardener of that ground, why it might be
That for this plant strangers his memory task'd
Through the thick deaths of half a century;
And thus he answered—" Well, I do not know
" Why frequent travellers turn to pilgrims so;

" He died before my day of Sextonship,
" And I had not the digging of this grave."
And is this all? I thought,—and do we rip
The veil of Immortality? and crave
I know not what of honour and of light
Through unborn ages, to endure this blight?
So soon and so successless? As I said,
The Architect of all on which we tread,
For Earth is but a tombstone, did essay
To extricate remembrance from the clay,
Whose minglings might confuse a Newton's thought
Were it not that all life must end in one,
Of which we are but dreamers;—as he caught
As 'twere the twilight of a former Sun,
Thus spoke he,—" I believe the man of whom
" You wot, who lies in this selected tomb,
" Was a most famous writer in his day,
" And therefore travellers step from out their way
" To pay him honour,—and myself whate'er
" Your honour pleases,"—then most pleased I shook
From out my pocket's avaricious nook
Some certain coins of silver, which as 'twere
Perforce I gave this man, though I could spare

So much but inconveniently;—Ye smile,
I see ye, ye profane ones! all the while,
Because my homely phrase the truth would tell.
You are the fools, not I—for I did dwell
With a deep thought, and with a soften'd eye,
On that Old Sexton's natural homily,
In which there was Obscurity and Fame,
The Glory and the Nothing of a Name.

THE DREAM.

I.

Our life is twofold; Sleep hath its own world,
A boundary between the things misnamed
Death and existence: Sleep hath its own world,
And a wide realm of wild reality,
And dreams in their developement have breath,
And tears, and tortures, and the touch of joy;
They leave a weight upon our waking thoughts,
They take a weight from off our waking toils,
They do divide our being; they become
A portion of ourselves as of our time, 10
And look like heralds of eternity;
They pass like spirits of the past,—they speak
Like sybils of the future; they have power—
The tyranny of pleasure and of pain;

They make us what we were not—what they will,
And shake us with the vision that's gone by,
The dread of vanish'd shadows—Are they so?
Is not the past all shadow? What are they?
Creations of the mind?—The mind can make
Substance, and people planets of its own 20
With beings brighter than have been, and give
A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh.
I would recall a vision which I dream'd
Perchance in sleep—for in itself a thought,
A slumbering thought, is capable of years,
And curdles a long life into one hour.

II.

I saw two beings in the hues of youth
Standing upon a hill, a gentle hill,
Green and of mild declivity, the last
As 'twere the cape of a long ridge of such, 30
Save that there was no sea to lave its base,
But a most living landscape, and the wave
Of woods and cornfields, and the abodes of men
Scattered at intervals, and wreathing smoke

Arising from such rustic roofs;—the hill
Was crown'd with a peculiar diadem
Of trees, in circular array, so fix'd,
Not by the sport of nature, but of man:
These two, a maiden and a youth, were there
Gazing—the one on all that was beneath 40
Fair as herself—but the boy gazed on her;
And both were young, and one was beautiful:
And both were young—yet not alike in youth.
As the sweet moon on the horizon's verge
The maid was on the eve of womanhood;
The boy had fewer summers, but his heart
Had far outgrown his years, and to his eye
There was but one beloved face on earth,
And that was shining on him; he had look'd
Upon it till it could not pass away; 50
He had no breath, no being, but in her's;
She was his voice; he did not speak to her,
But trembled on her words; she was his sight,
For his eye followed her's, and saw with her's,
Which coloured all his objects:—he had ceased
To live within himself; she was his life,

The ocean to the river of his thoughts,
Which terminated all: upon a tone,
A touch of her's, his blood would ebb and flow,
And his cheek change tempestuously—his heart 60
Unknowing of its cause of agony.
But she in these fond feelings had no share:
Her sighs were not for him; to her he was
Even as a brother—but no more; 'twas much,
For brotherless she was, save in the name
Her infant friendship had bestowed on him;
Herself the solitary scion left
Of a time-honoured race.—It was a name
Which pleased him, and yet pleased him not—and why?
Time taught him a deep answer—when she loved 70
Another; even *now* she loved another,
And on the summit of that hill she stood
Looking afar if yet her lover's steed
Kept pace with her expectancy, and flew.

III.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
There was an ancient mansion, and before

Its walls there was a steed caparisoned:
Within an antique Oratory stood
The Boy of whom I spake;—he was alone,
And pale, and pacing to and fro; anon 80
He sate him down, and seized a pen, and traced
Words which I could not guess of; then he lean'd
His bow'd head on his hands, and shook as 'twere
With a convulsion—then arose again,
And with his teeth and quivering hands did tear
What he had written; but he shed no tears.
And he did calm himself, and fix his brow
Into a kind of quiet; as he paused,
The Lady of his love re-entered there,
She was serene and smiling then, and yet 90
She knew she was by him beloved,—she knew,
For quickly comes such knowledge, that his heart
Was darken'd with her shadow, and she saw
That he was wretched, but she saw not all.
He rose, and with a cold and gentle grasp
He took her hand; a moment o'er his face
A tablet of unutterable thoughts
Was traced, and then it faded, as it came;

He dropped the hand he held, and with slow steps
Retired, but not as bidding her adieu, 100
For they did part with mutual smiles; he pass'd
From out the massy gate of that old Hall,
And mounting on his steed he went his way;
And ne'er repassed that hoary threshold more.

IV.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Boy was sprung to manhood: in the wilds
Of fiery climes he made himself a home,
And his Soul drank their sunbeams; he was girt
With strange and dusky aspects; he was not
Himself like what he had been; on the sea 110
And on the shore he was a wanderer;
There was a mass of many images
Crowded like waves upon me, but he was
A part of all; and in the last he lay
Reposing from the noon-tide sultriness,
Couched among fallen columns, in the shade
Of ruin'd walls that had survived the names
Of those who rear'd them; by his sleeping side

Stood camels grazing, and some goodly steeds
Were fasten'd near a fountain; and a man 120
Clad in a flowing garb did watch the while,
While many of his tribe slumber'd around:
And they were canopied by the blue sky,
So cloudless, clear, and purely beautiful,
That God alone was to be seen in Heaven.

V.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Lady of his love was wed with One
Who did not love her better;—in her home,
A thousand leagues from his,—her native home,
She dwelt, begirt with growing Infancy, 130
Daughters and sons of Beauty,—but behold!
Upon her face there was the tint of grief,
The settled shadow of an inward strife,
And an unquiet drooping of the eye
As if its lid were charged with unshed tears.
What could her grief be?—she had all she loved,
And he who had so loved her, was not there
To trouble with bad hopes, or evil wish,

Or ill-repress'd affliction, her pure thoughts.
What could her grief be?—she had loved him not,
Nor given him cause to deem himself beloved, 141
Nor could he be a part of that which prey'd
Upon her mind—a spectre of the past.

VI.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.—
The Wanderer was return'd.—I saw him stand
Before an Altar—with a gentle bride;
Her face was fair, but was not that which made
The Starlight of his Boyhood;—as he stood
Even at the altar, o'er his brow there came
The selfsame aspect, and the quivering shock 150
That in the antique Oratory shook
His bosom in its solitude; and then—
As in that hour—a moment o'er his face
The tablet of unutterable thoughts
Was traced,—and then it faded as it came,
And he stood calm and quiet, and he spoke
The fitting vows, but heard not his own words,
And all things reel'd around him; he could see

Not that which was, nor that which should have been—
But the old mansion, and the accustom'd hall, 160
And the remembered chambers, and the place,
The day, the hour, the sunshine, and the shade,
All things pertaining to that place and hour,
And her who was his destiny, came back
And thrust themselves between him and the light:
What business had they there at such a time?

VII.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The lady of his love;—Oh! she was changed
As by the sickness of the soul; her mind
Had wandered from its dwelling, and her eyes 170
They had not their own lustre, but the look
Which is not of the earth; she was become
The queen of a fantastic realm; her thoughts
Were combinations of disjointed things;
And forms impalpable and unperceived
Of others' sight familiar were to her's.
And this the world calls phrenzy; but the wise
Have a far deeper madness, and the glance

Of melancholy is a fearful gift;
What is it but the telescope of truth? 180
Which strips the distance of its phantasies,
And brings life near in utter nakedness,
Making the cold reality too real!

VIII.

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.—
The Wanderer was alone as heretofore,
The beings which surrounded him were gone,
Or were at war with him; he was a mark
For blight and desolation, compass'd round
With Hatred and Contention; Pain was mix'd
In all which was served up to him, until 190
Like to the Pontic monarch of old days,[6]
He fed on poisons, and they had no power,
But were a kind of nutriment; he lived
Through that which had been death to many men,
And made him friends of mountains: with the stars
And the quick Spirit of the Universe
He held his dialogues; and they did teach
To him the magic of their mysteries;

To him the book of Night was opened wide,
And voices from the deep abyss reveal'd 200
A marvel and a secret—Be it so.

IX.

My dream was past; it had no further change.
It was of a strange order, that the doom
Of these two creatures should be thus traced out
Almost like a reality—the one
To end in madness—both in misery.

THE INCANTATION.

(The following Poem was a Chorus in an unfinished Witch Drama, which was begun some years ago.)

I.

When the moon is on the wave,
And the glow-worm in the grass,
And the meteor on the grave,
And the wisp on tne morass;
When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answered owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still
In the shadow of the hill,
Shall my soul be upon thine,
With a power and with a sign.

II.

Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep,
There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not banish;
By a power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone;
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gathered in a cloud;
And for ever shalt thou dwell
In the spirit of this spell.

III.

Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee, and hath been;
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turn'd around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot,
And the power which thou dost feel
Shall be what thou must conceal.

IV.

And a magic voice and verse
Hath baptized thee with a curse;
And a spirit of the air
Hath begirt thee with a snare;
In the wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice;
And to thee shall Night deny
All the quiet of her sky;
And the day shall have a sun,
Which shall make thee wish it done.

V.

From thy false tears I did distil
An essence which hath strength to kill;
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest spring;
From thy own smile I snatched the snake,
For there it coil'd as in a brake;
From thy own lip I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm;
In proving every poison known,
I found the strongest was thine own.

VI.

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathom'd gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;
By the perfection of thine art
Which pass'd for human thine own heart;
By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee! and compel
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!

VII.

And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,
Shall be in thy destiny;
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear;
Lo! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee;
O'er thy heart and brain together
Hath the word been pass'd—now wither!

PROMETHEUS.

I.

TITAN! to whose immortal eyes
  The sufferings of mortality,
  Seen in their sad reality,
Were not as things that gods despise;
What was thy pity's recompense?
A silent suffering, and intense;
The rock, the vulture, and the chain,
All that the proud can feel of pain,
The agony they do not show,
The suffocating sense of woe,
  Which speaks but in its loneliness,
And then is jealous lest the sky
Should have a listener, nor will sigh
  Until its voice is echoless.

II.

Titan! to thee the strife was given
  Between the suffering and the will,
  Which torture where they cannot kill;
And the inexorable Heaven,
And the deaf tyranny of Fate,
The ruling principle of Hate,
Which for its pleasure doth create
The things it may annihilate,
Refused thee even the boon to die:
The wretched gift eternity
Was thine—and thou hast borne it well.
All that the Thunderer wrung from thee
Was but the menace which flung back
On him the torments of thy rack;
The fate thou didst so well foresee
But would not to appease him tell;
And in thy Silence was his Sentence,
And in his Soul a vain repentance,
And evil dread so ill dissembled
That in his hand the lightnings trembled.

III.

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind,
To render with thy precepts less
The sum of human wretchedness,
And strengthen Man with his own mind;
But baffled as thou wert from high,
Still in thy patient energy,
In the endurance, and repulse
Of thine impenetrable Spirit,
Which Earth and Heaven could not convulse,
A mighty lesson we inherit:
Thou art a symbol and a sign
To Mortals of their fate and force;
Like thee, Man is in part divine,
A troubled stream from a pure source;
And Man in portions can foresee
His own funereal destiny;
His wretchedness, and his resistance,
And his sad unallied existence:
To which his Spirit may oppose
Itself—an equal to all woes,

And a firm will, and a deep sense,
Which even in torture can descry
Its own concentered recompense,
Triumphant where it dares defy,
And making Death a Victory.

NOTES

TO THE

PRISONER OF CHILLON, &c.

Note 1, page 2, line 5.

By Bonnivard!—may none those marks efface.

François de Bonnivard, fils de Louis de Bonnivard, originaire de Seyssel & Seigneur de Lunes, naquit en 1496; il fit ses études à Turin: en 1510 Jean Aimé de Bonnivard, son oncle, lui resigna le Prieuré de St. Victor, qui aboutissoit aux murs de Geneve, & qui formait un benefice considerable.

Ce grand homme (Bonnivard mérite ce titre par la force de son âme, la droiture de son cœur, la noblesse de ses intentions, la sagesse de ses conseils, le courage de ses démarches, l'étendue de ses connaissances & la vivacité de son esprit), ce grand homme, qui excitera l'admiration de tous ceux qu'une vertu héroïque peut encore émouvoir, inspirera encore la plus vive reconnaissance dans les cœurs des Genevois qui aiment Geneve. Bonnivard en fut toujours undes plus fermes appuis: pour assurer la liberté de nôtre République, il ne craignit pas de perdre souvent la sienne; il

oublia son repos; il méprisa ses richesses; il ne négligea rien pour affermir le bonheur d'une patrie qu'il honora de son choix : dès ce moment il la chérit comme le plus zèlé de ses citoyens; il la servit avec l'intrépidité d'un héros, et il écrivit son Histoire avec la naïveté d'un philosophe & la chaleur d'un patriote.

Il dit dans le commencement de son histoire de Geneve, que, *dès qu'il eut commencé de lire l'histoire des nations, il se sentit entraîné par son goût pour les Républiques, dont il épousa toujours les interêts :* c'est ce goût pour la liberté qui lui fit sans doute adopter Geneve pour sa patrie.

Bonnivard, encore jeune, s'annonça hautement comme le defenseur de Geneve contre le Duc de Savoye et l'Evêque.

En 1519, Bonnivard devient le martyr de sa patrie : Le Duc de Savoye etant entré dans Geneve avec cinq cent hommes, Bonnivard craint le ressentiment du Duc; il voulut se retirer à Fribourg pour en éviter les suites; mais il fut trahi par deux hommes qui l'accompagnoient, & conduit par ordre du Prince à Grolée, où il resta prisonnier pendant deux ans. Bonnivard étoit malheureux dans ses voyages : comme ses malheurs n'avoient point ralenti son zèle pour Geneve, il étoit toujours un ennemi redoutable pour ceux qui la menaçoient, & par conséquent il devoit être exposé à leurs coups. Il fut rencontré en 1530 sur le Jura par des voleurs, qui le dépouillèrent, & qui le mirent encore entre les mains du Duc de Savoye : ce Prince le fit enfermer dans le Château de Chillon, où il resta sans être interrogé jusques en 1536;

il fut alors delivré par les Bernois, qui s'emparèrent du Pays de Vaud.

Bonnivard, en sortant de sa captivité, eut le plaisir de trouver Geneve libre & réformée; la République s'empressa de lui témoigner sa reconnoissance et de le dedommager des maux qu'il avoit soufferts; elle le reçut Bourgeois de la ville au mois de Juin 1536; elle lui donna la maison habitée autrefois par le Vicaire-General, et elle lui assigna une pension de 200 écus d'or tant qu'il sejourneroit à Geneve. Il fut admis dans le Conseil des Deux-Cent en 1537.

Bonnivard n'a pas fini d'être utile: après avoir travaillé à rendre Geneve libre, il réussit à la rendre tolérante. Bonnivard engagea le Conseil à accorder aux Ecclesiastiques & aux paysans un tems suffisant pour examiner les propositions qu'on leur faisoit; il réussit par sa douceur: on prêche toujours le Christianisme avec succès quand on le prêche avec charité.

Bonnivard fut savant; ses manuscrits, qui sont dans la Bibliothèque publique, prouvent qu'il avoit bien lu les auteurs classiques latins, & qu'il avoit approfondi la théologie & l'histoire. Ce grand homme aimoit les sciences, et il croyoit qu'elles pouvoient faire la gloire de Geneve; aussi il ne negligea rien pour les fixer dans cette ville naissante; en 1551 il donna sa bibliothèque au public; elle fut le commencement de notre bibliothèque publique; & ces livres sont en partie les rares & belles editions du quinzieme siecle qu'on voit dans notre collection. Enfin, pendant la même année,

ce bon patriote institua la Republique son héritière, à condition qu'elle employeroit ses biens à entretenir le college dont on projettoit la fondation.

Il paroit que Bonnivard mourut en 1570; mais on ne peut l'assurer, parcequ'il y a une lacune dans le Nécrologe depuis le mois de Juillet 1570 jusques en 1571.

Note 2, page 3, line 3.

In a single night.

Ludovico Sforza, and others.—The same is asserted of Marie Antoinette's, the wife of Louis XVI. though not in quite so short a period. Grief is said to have the same effect: to such, and not to fear, this change in *her's* was to be attributed.

Note 3, page 8, line 18.

From Chillon's snow-white battlement.

The Chateau de Chillon is situated between Clarens and Villeneuve, which last is at one extremity of the Lake of Geneva. On its left are the entrances of the Rhone, and opposite are the Heights of Melleirie and the range of Alps above Boveret and St. Gingo.

Near it, on a hill behind, is a torrent; below it, washing its walls, the lake has been fathomed to the depth of 800 feet (French measure); within it are a range of dungeons, in which the early reformers, and subsequently prisoners of state, were confined. Across one of the vaults is a beam

black with age, on which we were informed that the condemned were formerly executed. In the cells are seven pillars, or, rather, eight, one being half merged in the wall; in some of these are rings for the fetters and the fettered: in the pavement the steps of Bonnivard have left their traces—he was confined here several years.

It is by this castle that Rousseau has fixed the catastrophe of his Heloise, in the rescue of one of her children by Julie from the water; the shock of which, and the illness produced by the immersion, is the cause of her death.

The chateau is large, and seen along the lake for a great distance. The walls are white.

Note 4, page 19, line 16.

And then there was a little isle.

Between the entrances of the Rhone and Villeneuve, not far from Chillon, is a very small island; the only one I could perceive, in my voyage round and over the lake, within its circumference. It contains a few trees, (I think not above three,) and from its singleness and diminutive size has a peculiar effect upon the view.

When the foregoing poem was composed I was not sufficiently aware of the history of Bonnivard, or I should have endeavoured to dignify the subject by an attempt to celebrate his courage and his virtues. Some account of his life will be found in a note appended to the "Sonnet on Chillon," with which I have been furnished by the kindness of a citi-

zen of that Republic which is still proud of the memory of a man worthy of the best age of ancient freedom.

Note 5, page 23, line 2.

Leman! these names are worthy of thy shore.

Geneva, Ferney, Coppet, Lausanne.

Note 6, page 44, line 13.

Like to the Pontic monarch of old days.

Mithridates of Pontus.

THE

LAMENT OF TASSO.

BY LORD BYRON.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1817.

At Ferrara (in the library) are preserved the original MSS. of Tasso's Gierusalemme and of Guarini's Pastor Fido, with letters of Tasso, one from Titian to Ariosto; and the inkstand and chair, the tomb and the house of the latter. But as misfortune has a greater interest for posterity, and little or none for the cotemporary, the cell where Tasso was confined in the hospital of St. Anna attracts a more fixed attention than the residence or the monument of Ariosto—at least it had this effect on me. There are two inscriptions, one on the outer gate, the second over the cell itself, inviting, unnecessarily, the wonder and the indignation of the spectator. Ferrara is much decayed, and depopulated; the castle still exists entire; and I saw the court where Parisina and Hugo were beheaded, according to the annal of Gibbon.

THE

LAMENT OF TASSO.

I.

Long years!—It tries the thrilling frame to bear
And eagle-spirit of a Child of Song—
Long years of outrage, calumny, and wrong;
Imputed madness, prisoned solitude,
And the mind's canker in its savage mood,
When the impatient thirst of light and air
Parches the heart; and the abhorred grate,
Marring the sunbeams with its hideous shade,
Works through the throbbing eyeball to the brain
With a hot sense of heaviness and pain;
And bare, at once, Captivity displayed
Stands scoffing through the never-opened gate,
Which nothing through its bars admits, save day

And tasteless food, which I have eat alone
Till its unsocial bitterness is gone;
And I can banquet like a beast of prey,
Sullen and lonely, couching in the cave
Which is my lair, and—it may be—my grave.
All this hath somewhat worn me, and may wear,
But must be borne. I stoop not to despair;
For I have battled with mine agony,
And made me wings wherewith to overfly
The narrow circus of my dungeon wall,
And freed the Holy Sepulchre from thrall;
And revelled among men and things divine,
And poured my spirit over Palestine,
In honour of the sacred war for him,
The God who was on earth and is in heaven,
For he hath strengthened me in heart and limb.
That through this sufferance I might be forgiven,
I have employed my penance to record
How Salem's shrine was won, and how adored.

II.

But this is o'er—my pleasant task is done:—
My long-sustaining friend of many years!

If I do blot thy final page with tears,
Know, that my sorrows have wrung from me none.
But thou, my young creation! my soul's child!
Which ever playing round me came and smiled,
And wooed me from myself with thy sweet sight,
Thou too art gone—and so is my delight:
And therefore do I weep and inly bleed
With this last bruise upon a broken reed.
Thou too art ended—what is left me now?
For I have anguish yet to bear—and how?
I know not that—but in the inmate force
Of my own spirit shall be found resource.
I have not sunk, for I had no remorse,
Nor cause for such: they called me mad—and why?
Oh Leonora! wilt not *thou* reply?
I was indeed delirious in my heart
To lift my love so lofty as thou art;
But still my frenzy was not of the mind;
I knew my fault, and feel my punishment
Not less because I suffer it unbent.
That thou wert beautiful, and I not blind,
Hath been the sin which shuts me from mankind;
But let them go, or torture as they will,

My heart can multiply thine image still;
Successful love may sate itself away,
The wretched are the faithful; 'tis their fate
To have all feeling save the one decay,
And every passion into one dilate,
As rapid rivers into ocean pour;
But ours is fathomless, and hath no shore.

III.

Above me, hark! the long and maniac cry
Of minds and bodies in captivity.
And hark! the lash and the increasing howl,
And the half-inarticulate blasphemy!
There be some here with worse than frenzy foul,
Some who do still goad on the o'er-laboured mind,
And dim the little light that's left behind
With needless torture, as their tyrant will
Is wound up to the lust of doing ill:
With these and with their victims am I classed,
'Mid sounds and sights like these long years have passed;
'Mid sights and sounds like these my life may close:
So let it be—for then I shall repose.

IV.

I have been patient, let me be so yet;
I had forgotten half I would forget,
But it revives—oh! would it were my lot
To be forgetful as I am forgot!—
Feel I not wroth with those who bade me dwell
In this vast lazar-house of many woes?
Where laughter is not mirth, nor thought the mind,
Nor words a language, nor ev'n men mankind;
Where cries reply to curses, shrieks to blows,
And each is tortured in his separate hell—
For we are crowded in our solitudes—
Many, but each divided by the wall,
Which echoes Madness in her babbling moods;—
While all can hear, none heed his neighbour's call—
None! save that One, the veriest wretch of all,
Who was not made to be the mate of these,
Nor bound between Distraction and Disease.
Feel I not wroth with those who placed me here?
Who have debased me in the minds of men,
Debarring me the usage of my own,
Blighting my life in best of its career,
Branding my thoughts as things to shun and fear?

Would I not pay them back these pangs again,
And teach them inward sorrow's stifled groan?
The struggle to be calm, and cold distress,
Which undermines our Stoical success?
No!—still too proud to be vindictive—I
Have pardoned princes' insults, and would die.
Yes, Sister of my Sovereign! for thy sake
I weed all bitterness from out my breast,
It hath no business where *thou* art a guest;
Thy brother hates—but I can not detest;
Thou pitiest not—but I can not forsake.

V.

Look on a love which knows not to despair,
But all unquenched is still my better part,
Dwelling deep in my shut and silent heart
As dwells the gathered lightning in its cloud,
Encompassed with its dark and rolling shroud,
Till struck,—forth flies the all-etherial dart!
And thus at the collision of thy name
The vivid thought still flashes through my frame,
And for a moment all things as they were
Flit by me;—they are gone—I am the same.

And yet my love without ambition grew;
I knew thy state, my station, and I knew
A princess was no love-mate for a bard;
I told it not, I breathed it not, it was
Sufficient to itself, its own reward;
And if my eyes revealed it, they, alas!
Were punished by the silentness of thine,
And yet I did not venture to repine.
Thou wert to me a crystal-girded shrine,
Worshipped at holy distance, and around
Hallowed and meekly kissed the saintly ground;
Not for thou wert a princess, but that Love
Had robed thee with a glory, and arrayed
Thy lineaments in beauty that dismayed—
Oh! not dismayed—but awed, like One above;
And in that sweet severity there was
A something which all softness did surpass—
I know not how—thy genius mastered mine—
My star stood still before thee:—if it were
Presumptuous thus to love without design,
That sad fatality hath cost me dear;
But thou art dearest still, and I should be
Fit for this cell, which wrongs me, but for *thee*.

The very love which locked me to my chain
Hath lightened half its weight; and for the rest,
Though heavy, lent me vigour to sustain,
And look to thee with undivided breast,
And foil the ingenuity of Pain.

VI.

It is no marvel—from my very birth
My soul was drunk with love, which did pervade
And mingle with whate'er I saw on earth;
Of objects all inanimate I made
Idols, and out of wild and lonely flowers,
And rocks, whereby they grew, a paradise,
Where I did lay me down within the shade
Of waving trees, and dreamed uncounted hours,
Though I was chid for wandering; and the wise
Shook their white aged heads o'er me, and said
Of such materials wretched men were made,
And such a truant boy would end in woe,
And that the only lesson was a blow;
And then they smote me, and I did not weep,
But cursed them in my heart, and to my haunt
Returned and wept alone, and dreamed again

The visions which arise without a sleep.
And with my years my soul began to pant
With feelings of strange tumult and soft pain;
And the whole heart exhaled into One Want,
But undefined and wandering, till the day
I found the thing I sought—and that was thee;
And then I lost my being all to be
Absorbed in thine—the world was past away—
Thou didst annihilate the earth to me!

VII.

I loved all solitude—but little thought
To spend I know not what of life, remote
From all communion with existence, save
The maniac and his tyrant; had I been
Their fellow, many years ere this had seen
My mind like theirs corrupted to its grave,
But who hath seen me writhe, or heard me rave?
Perchance in such a cell we suffer more
Than the wrecked sailor on his desart shore;
The world is all before him—*mine* is *here*,
Scarce twice the space they must accord my bier.

What though *he* perish, he may lift his eye
And with a dying glance upbraid the sky—
I will not raise my own in such reproof,
Although 'tis clouded by my dungeon roof.

VIII.

Yet do I feel at times my mind decline,
But with a sense of its decay:—I see
Unwonted lights along my prison shine,
And a strange demon, who is vexing me
With pilfering pranks and petty pains, below
The feeling of the healthful and the free;
But much to One, who long hath suffered so,
Sickness of heart, and narrowness of place,
And all that may be borne, or can debase.
I thought mine enemies had been but man,
But spirits may be leagued with them—all Earth
Abandons—Heaven forgets me;—in the dearth
Of such defence the Powers of Evil can,
It may be, tempt me further, and prevail
Against the outworn creature they assail.
Why in this furnace is my spirit proved

Like steel in tempering fire? because I loved?
Because I loved what not to love, and see,
Was more or less than mortal, and than me.

IX.

I once was quick in feeling—that is o'er;—
My scars are callous, or I should have dashed
My brain against these bars as the sun flashed
In mockery through them;—if I bear and bore
The much I have recounted, and the more
Which hath no words, 'tis that I would not die
And sanction with self-slaughter the dull lie
Which snared me here, and with the brand of shame
Stamp madness deep into my memory,
And woo compassion to a blighted name,
Sealing the sentence which my foes proclaim.
No—it shall be immortal!—and I make
A future temple of my present cell,
Which nations yet shall visit for my sake.
While thou, Ferrara! when no longer dwell
The ducal chiefs within thee, shalt fall down,
And crumbling piecemeal view thy hearthless halls,
A poet's wreath shall be thine only crown,

A poet's dungeon thy most far renown,
While strangers wonder o'er thy unpeopled walls!
And thou, Leonora! thou—who wert ashamed
That such as I could love—who blushed to hear
To less than monarchs that thou couldst be dear,
Go! tell thy brother that my heart, untamed
By grief, years, weariness—and it may be
A taint of that he would impute to me—
From long infection of a den like this,
Where the mind rots congenial with the abyss,
Adores thee still;—and add—that when the towers
And battlements which guard his joyous hours
Of banquet, dance, and revel, are forgot,
Or left untended in a dull repose,
This—this shall be a consecrated spot!
But Thou—when all that Birth and Beauty throws
Of magic round thee is extinct—shalt have
One half the laurel which o'ershades my grave.
No power in death can tear our names apart,
As none in life could rend thee from my heart.
Yes, Leonora! it shall be our fate
To be entwined for ever—but too late!

MAZEPPA.

LONDON:
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MAZEPPA,

A POEM.

BY LORD BYRON.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1819.

MAZEPPA.

ADVERTISEMENT.

" CELUI qui remplissait alors cette place, était un gentil-
" homme Polonais, nommé Mazeppa, né dans le palatinat
" de Padolie; il avait été élevé page de Jean Casimir, et
" avait pris à sa cour quelque teinture des belles-lettres.
" Une intrigue qu'il eut dans sa jeunesse avec la femme d'un
" gentilhomme Polonais, ayant été découverte, le mari le fit lier
" tout nu sur un cheval farouche, et le laissa aller en cet état.
" Le cheval, qui était du pays de l'Ukraine, y retourna, et y
" porta Mazeppa, demi-mort de fatigue et de faim. Quelque
" paysans le secoururent: il resta long-tems parmi eux, et se
" signala dans plusieurs courses contre les Tartares. La
" supériorité de ses lumières lui donna une grande con-
" sidération parmi les Cosaques: sa réputation s'augmentant
" de jour en jour, obligea le Czar à le faire Prince de
" l'Ukraine."—VOLTAIRE, *Histoire de Charles XII.* p. 196.

" Le roi fuyant et poursuivi eut son cheval tué sous lui;
" le Colonel Gieta, blessé, et perdant tout sa sang, lui donna
" le sien. Ainsi on remit deux fois à cheval, dans la suite,
" ce conquérant qui n'avait puy monter pendant la bataille."
VOLTAIRE, *Hist. de Charles XII.* p. 216.

ADVERTISEMENT.

" Le roi alla par un autre chemin avec quelques cavaliers. " Le carrosse, où il était, rompit dans la marche ; on le remit " à cheval. Pour comble de disgrace, il s'égara pendant la " nuit dans un bois ; là, son courage ne pouvant plus suppléer " à ses forces épuisées, les douleurs de sa blessure devenues " plus insupportable par la fatigue, son cheval étant tombé " de lassitude, il se coucha quelques heures au pied d'un " arbre, en danger d'être surpris à tout moment par les " vainqueurs qui le cherchaient de tout côtés."—VOLTAIRE, *Histoire de Charles XII.* p. 218.

MAZEPPA.

I.

'TWAS after dread Pultowa's day,
  When fortune left the royal Swede,
Around a slaughter'd army lay,
  No more to combat and to bleed.
The power and glory of the war,
  Faithless as their vain votaries, men,
Had pass'd to the triumphant Czar,
  And Moscow's walls were safe again,
Until a day more dark and drear,
And a more memorable year, 10
Should give to slaughter and to shame
A mightier host and haughtier name;
A greater wreck, a deeper fall,
A shock to one—a thunderbolt to all.

II.

Such was the hazard of the die;
The wounded Charles was taught to fly
By day and night through field and flood,
Stain'd with his own and subjects' blood;
For thousands fell that flight to aid:
And not a voice was heard t'upbraid 20
Ambition in his humbled hour,
When truth had nought to dread from power.
His horse was slain, and Gieta gave
His own—and died the Russians' slave.
This too sinks after many a league
Of well sustain'd, but vain fatigue;
And in the depth of forests, darkling,
The watch-fires in the distance sparkling—
The beacons of surrounding foes—
A king must lay his limbs at length. 30
Are these the laurels and repose
For which the nations strain their strength?
They laid him by a savage tree,
In out-worn nature's agony;
His wounds were stiff—his limbs were stark—
The heavy hour was chill and dark;

The fever in his blood forbade
A transient slumber's fitful aid:
And thus it was; but yet through all,
Kinglike the monarch bore his fall, 40
And made, in this extreme of ill,
His pangs the vassals of his will;
All silent and subdued were they,
As once the nations round him lay.

III.

A band of chiefs!—alas! how few,
  Since but the fleeting of a day
Had thinn'd it; but this wreck was true
  And chivalrous: upon the clay
Each sate him down, all sad and mute,
  Beside his monarch and his steed, 50
For danger levels man and brute,
  And all are fellows in their need.
Among the rest, Mazeppa made
His pillow in an old oak's shade—
Himself as rough, and scarce less old,
The Ukraine's hetman, calm and bold;

But first, outspent with this long course,
The Cossack prince rubb'd down his horse,
And made for him a leafy bed,
And smooth'd his fetlocks and his mane, 60
And slack'd his girth, and stripp'd his rein,
And joy'd to see how well he fed;
For until now he had the dread
His wearied courser might refuse
To browze beneath the midnight dews:
But he was hardy as his lord,
And little cared for bed and board;
But spirited and docile too;
Whate'er was to be done, would do.
Shaggy and swift, and strong of limb, 70
All Tartar-like he carried him;
Obey'd his voice, and came at call,
And knew him in the midst of all:
Though thousands were around,—and Night,
Without a star, pursued her flight,—
That steed from sunset until dawn
His chief would follow like a fawn.

IV.

This done, Mazeppa spread his cloak,
And laid his lance beneath his oak,
Felt if his arms in order good 80
The long day's march had well withstood—
If still the powder fill'd the pan,
  And flints unloosen'd kept their lock—
His sabre's hilt and scabbard felt,
And whether they had chafed his belt—
And next the venerable man,
From out his haversack and can,
  Prepared and spread his slender stock;
And to the monarch and his men
The whole or portion offer'd then 90
With far less of inquietude
Than courtiers at a banquet would.
And Charles of this his slender share
With smiles partook a moment there,
To force of cheer a greater show,
And seem above both wounds and woe;—
And then he said—" Of all our band,
" Though firm of heart and strong of hand,

" In skirmish, march, or forage, none
" Can less have said or more have done 100
" Than thee, Mazeppa! On the earth
" So fit a pair had never birth,
" Since Alexander's days till now,
" As thy Bucephalus and thou:
" All Scythia's fame to thine should yield
" For pricking on o'er flood and field."
Mazeppa answer'd—" Ill betide
" The school wherein I learn'd to ride!"
Quoth Charles—" Old Hetman, wherefore so,
" Since thou hast learn'd the art so well?" 110
Mazeppa said—" 'Twere long to tell;
" And we have many a league to go
" With every now and then a blow,
" And ten to one at least the foe,
" Before our steeds may graze at ease
" Beyond the swift Borysthenes:
" And, sire, your limbs have need of rest,
" And I will be the sentinel
" Of this your troop."—" But I request,"
Said Sweden's monarch, " thou wilt tell 120

"This tale of thine, and I may reap,
"Perchance, from this the boon of sleep,
"For at this moment from my eyes
"The hope of present slumber flies."

"Well, sire, with such a hope, I'll track
"My seventy years of memory back:
"I think 'twas in my twentieth spring,—
"Ay, 'twas,—when Casimir was king—
"John Casimir,—I was his page
"Six summers in my earlier age; 130
"A learned monarch, faith! was he,
"And most unlike your majesty:
"He made no wars, and did not gain
"New realms to lose them back again;
"And (save debates in Warsaw's diet)
"He reign'd in most unseemly quiet;
"Not that he had no cares to vex,
"He loved the muses and the sex;
"And sometimes these so froward are,
"They made him wish himself at war; 140
"But soon his wrath being o'er, he took
"Another mistress, or new book:

"And then he gave prodigious fêtes—
"All Warsaw gather'd round his gates
"To gaze upon his splendid court,
"And dames, and chiefs, of princely port:
"He was the Polish Solomon,
"So sung his poets, all but one,
"Who, being unpension'd, made a satire,
"And boasted that he could not flatter. 150
"It was a court of jousts and mimes,
"Where every courtier tried at rhymes;
"Even I for once produced some verses,
"And sign'd my odes Despairing Thirsis.
"There was a certain Palatine,
"A count of far and high descent,
"Rich as a salt or silver mine;*
"And he was proud, ye may divine,
"As if from heaven he had been sent:
"He had such wealth in blood and ore 160
"As few could match beneath the throne;
"And he would gaze upon his store,
"And o'er his pedigree would pore,

* This comparison of a "*salt* mine" may perhaps be permitted to a Pole, as the wealth of the country consists greatly in the salt mines.

" Until by some confusion led,
" Which almost look'd like want of head,
" He thought their merits were his own.
" His wife was not of his opinion—
" His junior she by thirty years—
" Grew daily tired of his dominion;
" And, after wishes, hopes, and fears, 170
" To virtue a few farewell tears,
" A restless dream or two, some glances
" At Warsaw's youth, some songs, and dances,
" Awaited but the usual chances,
" Those happy accidents which render
" The coldest dames so very tender,
" To deck her Count with titles given,
" 'Tis said, as passports into heaven;
" But, strange to say, they rarely boast
" Of these who have deserved them most. 180

V.

" I was a goodly stripling then;
" At seventy years I so may say,
" That there were few, or boys or men,
" Who, in my dawning time of day,

" Of vassal or of knight's degree,
" Could vie in vanities with me;
" For I had strength, youth, gaiety,
" A port, not like to this ye see,
" But smooth, as all is rugged now;
" For time, and care, and war, have plough'd 190
" My very soul from out my brow;
" And thus I should be disavow'd
" By all my kind and kin, could they
" Compare my day and yesterday;
" This change was wrought, too, long ere age
" Had ta'en my features for his page:
" With years, ye know, have not declined
" My strength, my courage, or my mind,
" Or at this hour I should not be
" Telling old tales beneath a tree, 200
" With starless skies my canopy.
" But let me on: Theresa's form—
" Methinks it glides before me now,
" Between me and yon chestnut's bough,
" The memory is so quick and warm;
" And yet I find no words to tell
" The shape of her I loved so well:

" She had the Asiatic eye,
" Such as our Turkish neighbourhood
" Hath mingled with our Polish blood, 210
" Dark as above us is the sky;
" But through it stole a tender light,
" Like the first moonrise at midnight;
" Large, dark, and swimming in the stream,
" Which seem'd to melt to its own beam;
" All love, half languor, and half fire,
" Like saints that at the stake expire,
" And lift their raptured looks on high,
" As though it were a joy to die.
" A brow like a midsummer lake, 220
" Transparent with the sun therein,
" When waves no murmur dare to make,
" And heaven beholds her face within.
" A cheek and lip—but why proceed?
" I loved her then—I love her still;
" And such as I am, love indeed
" In fierce extremes—in good and ill,
" But still we love even in our rage,
" And haunted to our very age

"With the vain shadow of the past, 230
"As is Mazeppa to the last.

VI.

"We met—we gazed—I saw, and sigh'd,
"She did not speak, and yet replied;
"There are ten thousand tones and signs
"We hear and see, but none defines—
"Involuntary sparks of thought,
"Which strike from out the heart o'erwrought,
"And form a strange intelligence,
"Alike mysterious and intense,
"Which link the burning chain that binds, 240
"Without their will, young hearts and minds;
"Conveying, as the electric wire,
"We know not how, the absorbing fire.—
"I saw, and sigh'd—in silence wept,
"And still reluctant distance kept,
"Until I was made known to her,
"And we might then and there confer
"Without suspicion—then, even then,
"I long'd, and was resolved to speak;

" But on my lips they died again, 250
" The accents tremulous and weak,
" Until one hour.—There is a game,
" A frivolous and foolish play,
" Wherewith we while away the day;
" It is—I have forgot the name—
" And we to this, it seems, were set,
" By some strange chance, which I forget:
" I reck'd not if I won or lost,
" It was enough for me to be
" So near to hear, and oh! to see 260
" The being whom I loved the most.--
" I watch'd her as a sentinel,
" (May ours this dark night watch as well!)
" Until I saw, and thus it was,
" That she was pensive, nor perceived
" Her occupation, nor was grieved
" Nor glad to lose or gain; but still
" Play'd on for hours, as if her will
" Yet bound her to the place, though not
" That hers might be the winning lot. 270

" Then through my brain the thought did pass
" Even as a flash of lightning there,
" That there was something in her air
" Which would not doom me to despair;
" And on the thought my words broke forth,
" All incoherent as they were—
" Their eloquence was little worth,
" But yet she listen'd—'tis enough—
" Who listens once will listen twice;
" Her heart, be sure, is not of ice, 280
" And one refusal no rebuff.

VII.

" I loved, and was beloved again—
" They tell me, Sire, you never knew
" Those gentle frailties; if 'tis true,
" I shorten all my joy or pain;
" To you 'twould seem absurd as vain;
" But all men are not born to reign,
" Or o'er their passions, or as you
" Thus o'er themselves and nations too.

" I am—or rather *was*—a prince, 290
" A chief of thousands, and could lead
" Them on where each would foremost bleed;
" But could not o'er myself evince
" The like control—But to resume:
" I loved, and was beloved again;
" In sooth, it is a happy doom,
" But yet where happiest ends in pain.—
" We met in secret, and the hour
" Which led me to that lady's bower
" Was fiery Expectation's dower. 300
" My days and nights were nothing—all
" Except that hour, which doth recal
" In the long lapse from youth to age
" No other like itself—I'd give
" The Ukraine back again to live
" It o'er once more—and be a page,
" The happy page, who was the lord
" Of one soft heart, and his own sword,
" And had no other gem nor wealth
" Save nature's gift of youth and health.— 310

" We met in secret—doubly sweet,
" Some say, they find it so to meet;
" I know not that—I would have given
" My life but to have call'd her mine
" In the full view of earth and heaven;
" For I did oft and long repine
" That we could only meet by stealth.

VIII.

" For lovers there are many eyes,
" And such there were on us;—the devil
" On such occasions should be civil— 320
" The devil!—I'm loth to do him wrong,
" It might be some untoward saint,
" Who would not be at rest too long,
" But to his pious bile gave vent—
" But one fair night, some lurking spies
" Surprised and seized us both.
" The Count was something more than wroth—
" I was unarm'd; but if in steel,
" All cap-à-pie from head to heel,
" What 'gainst their numbers could I do?— 330

" 'Twas near his castle, far away
  " From city or from succour near,
" And almost on the break of day;
" I did not think to see another,
  " My moments seem'd reduced to few;
" And with one prayer to Mary Mother,
  " And, it may be, a saint or two,
" As I resign'd me to my fate,
" They led me to the castle gate:
  " Theresa's doom I never knew, 340
" Our lot was henceforth separate.—
" An angry man, ye may opine,
" Was he, the proud Count Palatine;
" And he had reason good to be,
  " But he was most enraged lest such
  " An accident should chance to touch
" Upon his future pedigree;
" Nor less amazed, that such a blot
" His noble 'scutcheon should have got,
" While he was highest of his line; 350
  " Because unto himself he seem'd
  " The first of men, nor less he deem'd
" In others' eyes, and most in mine.

" 'S death! with a *page*—perchance a king
" Had reconciled him to the thing;
" But with a stripling of a page—
" I felt—but cannot paint his rage.

IX.

" 'Bring forth the horse!'—the horse was brought;
" In truth, he was a noble steed,
" A Tartar of the Ukraine breed, 360
" Who look'd as though the speed of thought
" Were in his limbs; but he was wild,
" Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,
" With spur and bridle undefiled—
" 'Twas but a day he had been caught;
" And snorting, with erected mane,
" And struggling fiercely, but in vain,
" In the full foam of wrath and dread
" To me the desert-born was led:
" They bound me on, that menial throng, 370
" Upon his back with many a thong;
" Then loosed him with a sudden lash—
" Away!—away!—and on we dash!—
" Torrents less rapid and less rash.

X.

" Away !—away !—My breath was gone—
" I saw not where he hurried on:
" 'Twas scarcely yet the break of day,
" And on he foam'd—away !—away !—
" The last of human sounds which rose,
" As I was darted from my foes, 380
" Was the wild shout of savage laughter,
" Which on the wind came roaring after
" A moment from that rabble rout:
" With sudden wrath I wrench'd my head,
" And snapp'd the cord, which to the mane
" Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,
" And, writhing half my form about,
" Howl'd back my curse; but 'midst the tread,
" The thunder of my courser's speed,
" Perchance they did not hear nor heed: 390
" It vexes me—for I would fain
" Have paid their insult back again.
" I paid it well in after days:
" There is not of that castle gate,
" Its drawbridge and portcullis' weight,
" Stone, bar, moat, bridge, or barrier left;

" Nor of its fields a blade of grass,
" Save what grows on a ridge of wall,
" Where stood the hearth-stone of the hall;
" And many a time ye there might pass, 400
" Nor dream that e'er that fortress was:
" I saw its turrets in a blaze,
" Their crackling battlements all cleft,
" And the hot lead pour down like rain
" From off the scorch'd and blackening roof,
" Whose thickness was not vengeance-proof.
" They little thought that day of pain,
" When lanch'd, as on the lightning's flash,
" They bade me to destruction dash,
" That one day I should come again, 410
" With twice five thousand horse, to thank
" The Count for his uncourteous ride.
" They play'd me then a bitter prank,
" When, with the wild horse for my guide,
" They bound me to his foaming flank:
" At length I play'd them one as frank—
" For time at last sets all things even—
" And if we do but watch the hour,
" There never yet was human power
" Which could evade, if unforgiven, 420

" The patient search and vigil long
" Of him who treasures up a wrong.

XI.

" Away, away, my steed and I,
" Upon the pinions of the wind,
" All human dwellings left behind;
" We sped like meteors through the sky,
" When with its crackling sound the night
" Is chequer'd with the northern light:
" Town—village—none were on our track,
" But a wild plain of far extent, 430
" And bounded by a forest black;
" And, save the scarce seen battlement
" On distant heights of some strong hold,
" Against the Tartars built of old,
" No trace of man. The year before
" A Turkish army had march'd o'er;
" And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,
" The verdure flies the bloody sod:—
" The sky was dull, and dim, and gray,
" And a low breeze crept moaning by— 440
" I could have answer'd with a sigh—

" But fast we fled, away, away—
" And I could neither sigh nor pray;
" And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain
" Upon the courser's bristling mane;
" But, snorting still with rage and fear,
" He flew upon his far career:
" At times I almost thought, indeed,
" He must have slacken'd in his speed;
" But no—my bound and slender frame 450
" Was nothing to his angry might,
" And merely like a spur became:
" Each motion which I made to free
" My swoln limbs from their agony
" Increased his fury and affright:
" I tried my voice,—'twas faint and low,
" But yet he swerved as from a blow;
" And, starting to each accent, sprang
" As from a sudden trumpet's clang:
" Meantime my cords were wet with gore, 460
" Which, oozing through my limbs, ran o'er;
" And in my tongue the thirst became
" A something fierier far than flame.

XII.

" We near'd the wild wood—'twas so wide,
" I saw no bounds on either side;
" Twas studded with old sturdy trees,
" That bent not to the roughest breeze
" Which howls down from Siberia's waste,
" And strips the forest in its haste,—
" But these were few, and far between 470
" Set thick with shrubs more young and green,
" Luxuriant with their annual leaves,
" Ere strown by those autumnal eves
" That nip the forest's foliage dead,
" Discolour'd with a lifeless red,
" Which stands thereon like stiffen'd gore
" Upon the slain when battle's o'er,
" And some long winter's night hath shed
" Its frost o'er every tombless head,
" So cold and stark the raven's beak 480
" May peck unpierced each frozen cheek:
" 'Twas a wild waste of underwood,
" And here and there a chestnut stood,

" The strong oak, and the hardy pine;
" But far apart—and well it were,
" Or else a different lot were mine—
" The boughs gave way, and did not tear
" My limbs; and I found strength to bear
" My wounds, already scarr'd with cold—
" My bonds forbade to loose my hold. 490
" We rustled through the leaves like wind,
" Left shrubs, and trees, and wolves behind;
" By night I heard them on the track,
" Their troop came hard upon our back,
" With their long gallop, which can tire
" The hound's deep hate, and hunter's fire:
" Where'er we flew they follow'd on,
" Nor left us with the morning sun;
" Behind I saw them, scarce a rood,
" At day-break winding through the wood, 500
" And through the night had heard their feet
" Their stealing, rustling step repeat.
" Oh! how I wish'd for spear or sword,
" At least to die amidst the horde,

" And perish—if it must be so—
" At bay, destroying many a foe.
" When first my courser's race begun,
" I wish'd the goal already won;
" But now I doubted strength and speed.
" Vain doubt! his swift and savage breed 510
" Had nerved him like the mountain-roe;
" Nor faster falls the blinding snow
" Which whelms the peasant near the door
" Whose threshold he shall cross no more,
" Bewilder'd with the dazzling blast,
" Than through the forest-paths he past—
" Untired, untamed, and worse than wild;
" All furious as a favour'd child
" Balk'd of its wish; or fiercer still—
" A woman piqued—who has her will. 520

XIII.

" 'The wood was past; 'twas more than noon,
" But chill the air, although in June;
" Or it might be my veins ran cold—
" Prolong'd endurance tames the bold;

" And I was then not what I seem,
" But headlong as a wintry stream,
" And wore my feelings out before
" I well could count their causes o'er:
" And what with fury, fear, and wrath,
" The tortures which beset my path, 530
" Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,
" Thus bound in nature's nakedness;
" Sprung from a race whose rising blood
" When stirr'd beyond its calmer mood,
" And trodden hard upon, is like
" The rattle-snake's, in act to strike,
" What marvel if this worn-out trunk
" Beneath its woes a moment sunk?
" The earth gave way, the skies roll'd round,
" I seem'd to sink upon the ground; 540
" But err'd, for I was fastly bound.
" My heart turn'd sick, my brain grew sore,
" And throbb'd awhile, then beat no more:
" The skies spun like a mighty wheel;
" I saw the trees like drunkards reel,

" And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,
" Which saw no farther: he who dies
" Can die no more than then I died.
" O'ertortured by that ghastly ride,
" I felt the blackness come and go, 550
" And strove to wake; but could not make
" My senses climb up from below:
" I felt as on a plank at sea,
" When all the waves that dash o'er thee,
" At the same time upheave and whelm,
" And hurl thee towards a desert realm.
" My undulating life was as
" The fancied lights that flitting pass
" Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when
" Fever begins upon the brain; 560
" But soon it pass'd, with little pain,
" But a confusion worse than such:
" I own that I should deem it much,
" Dying, to feel the same again;
" And yet I do suppose we must
" Feel far more ere we turn to dust:

" No matter; I have bared my brow
" Full in Death's face—before—and now.

XIV.

" My thoughts came back; where was I? Cold,
" And numb, and giddy: pulse by pulse 570
" Life reassumed its lingering hold,
" And throb by throb; till grown a pang
" Which for a moment would convulse,
" My blood reflow'd, though thick and chill;
" My ear with uncouth noises rang,
" My heart began once more to thrill;
" My sight return'd, though dim; alas!
" And thicken'd, as it were, with glass.
" Methought the dash of waves was nigh;
" There was a gleam too of the sky, 580
" Studded with stars;—it is no dream;
" The wild horse swims the wilder stream!
" The bright broad river's gushing tide
" Sweeps, winding onward, far and wide,
" And we are half-way, struggling o'er
" To yon unknown and silent shore.

" The waters broke my hollow trance,
" And with a temporary strength
" My stiffen'd limbs were rebaptized.
" My courser's broad breast proudly braves, 590
" And dashes off the ascending waves
" And onward we advance!
" We reach the slippery shore at length,
" A haven I but little prized,
" For all behind was dark and drear,
" And all before was night and fear.
" How many hours of night or day
" In those suspended pangs I lay,
" I could not tell; I scarcely knew
" If this were human breath I drew. 600

XV.

" With glossy skin, and dripping mane,
" And reeling limbs, and reeking flank,
" The wild steed's sinewy nerves still strain
" Up the repelling bank.
" We gain the top: a boundless plain
" Spreads through the shadow of the night,

" And onward, onward, onward, seems
" Like precipices in our dreams,
" To stretch beyond the sight;
" And here and there a speck of white, 610
" Or scatter'd spot of dusky green,
" In masses broke into the light,
" As rose the moon upon my right.
" But nought distinctly seen
" In the dim waste, would indicate
" The omen of a cottage gate;
" No twinkling taper from afar
" Stood like an hospitable star;
" Not even an ignis-fatuus rose
" To make him merry with my woes: 620
" That very cheat had cheer'd me then!
" Although detected, welcome still,
" Reminding me, through every ill,
" Of the abodes of men.

XVI.

" Onward we went—but slack and slow;
" His savage force at length o'erspent,

" The drooping courser, faint and low,
" All feebly foaming went.
" A sickly infant had had power
" To guide him forward in that hour; 630
" But useless all to me.
" His new-born tameness nought avail'd,
" My limbs were bound; my force had fail'd,
" Perchance, had they been free.
" With feeble effort still I tried
" To rend the bonds so starkly tied—
" But still it was in vain;
" My limbs were only wrung the more,
" And soon the idle strife gave o'er,
" Which but prolong'd their pain: 640
" The dizzy race seem'd almost done,
" Although no goal was nearly won:
" Some streaks announced the coming sun—
" How slow, alas! he came!
" Methought that mist of dawning gray
" Would never dapple into day;
" How heavily it roll'd away—
" Before the eastern flame

" Rose crimson, and deposed the stars,
" And call'd the radiance from their cars, 650
" And fill'd the earth, from his deep throne,
" With lonely lustre, all his own.

XVII.

" Up rose the sun; the mists were curl'd
" Back from the solitary world
" Which lay around—behind—before:
" What booted it to traverse o'er
" Plain, forest, river? Man nor brute,
" Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,
" Lay in the wild luxuriant soil;
" No sign of travel—none of toil; 660
" The very air was mute;
" And not an insect's shrill small horn,
" Nor matin bird's new voice was borne
" From herb nor thicket. Many a werst,
" Panting as if his heart would burst,
" The weary brute still stagger'd on;
" And still we were—or seem'd—alone:

" At length, while reeling on our way,
" Methought I heard a courser neigh,
" From out yon tuft of blackening firs. 670
" Is it the wind those branches stirs?
" No, no! from out the forest prance
" A trampling troop; I see them come!
" In one vast squadron they advance!
" I strove to cry—my lips were dumb.
" The steeds rush on in plunging pride;
" But where are they the reins to guide?
" A thousand horse—and none to ride!
" With flowing tail, and flying mane,
" Wide nostrils—never stretch'd by pain, 680
" Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
" And feet that iron never shod,
" And flanks unscarr'd by spur or rod.
" A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
" Like waves that follow o'er the sea,
" Came thickly thundering on,
" As if our faint approach to meet;
" The sight re-nerved my courser's feet,
" A moment staggering, feebly fleet,

" A moment, with a faint low neigh, 690
" He answer'd, and then fell;
" With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
" And reeking limbs immoveable,
" His first and last career is done!
" On came the troop—they saw him stoop,
" They saw me strangely bound along
" His back with many a bloody thong:
" They stop—they start—they snuff the air,
" Gallop a moment here and there,
" Approach, retire, wheel round and round, 700
" Then plunging back with sudden bound,
" Headed by one black mighty steed,
" Who seem'd the patriarch of his breed,
" Without a single speck or hair
" Of white upon his shaggy hide;
" They snort—they foam—neigh—swerve aside,
" And backward to the forest fly,
" By instinct, from a human eye.—
" They left me there, to my despair,
" Link'd to the dead and stiffening wretch, 710
" Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch,

" Relieved from that unwonted weight,
" From whence I could not extricate
" Nor him nor me—and there we lay,
  " The dying on the dead!
" I little deem'd another day
  " Would see my houseless, helpless head.

" And there from morn till twilight bound,
" I felt the heavy hours toil round,
" With just enough of life to see 720
" My last of suns go down on me,
" In hopeless certainty of mind,
" That makes us feel at length resign'd
" To that which our foreboding years
" Presents the worst and last of fears
" Inevitable—even a boon,
" Nor more unkind for coming soon;
" Yet shunn'd and dreaded with such care,
" As if it only were a snare
  " That prudence might escape: 730
" At times both wish'd for and implored,
" At times sought with self-pointed sword,

" Yet still a dark and hideous close
" To even intolerable woes,
  " And welcome in no shape.
" And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure,
" They who have revell'd beyond measure
" In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure,
" Die calm, or calmer, oft than he
" Whose heritage was misery: 740
" For he who hath in turn run through
" All that was beautiful and new,
  " Hath nought to hope, and nought to leave;
" And, save the future, (which is view'd
" Not quite as men are base or good,
" But as their nerves may be endued),
  " With nought perhaps to grieve:—
" The wretch still hopes his woes must end,
" And Death, whom he should deem his friend,
" Appears, to his distemper'd eyes, 750
" Arrived to rob him of his prize,
" The tree of his new Paradise.
" To-morrow would have given him all,
" Repaid his pangs, repair'd his fall;

" To-morrow would have been the first
" Of days no more deplored or curst,
" But bright, and long, and beckoning years,
" Seen dazzling through the mist of tears,
" Guerdon of many a painful hour;
" To-morrow would have given him power 760
" To rule, to shine, to smite, to save—
" And must it dawn upon his grave?

XVIII.

" The sun was sinking—still I lay
  " Chain'd to the chill and stiffening steed,
" I thought to mingle there our clay;
  " And my dim eyes of death had need,
  " No hope arose of being freed:
" I cast my last looks up the sky,
  " And there between me and the sun
" I saw the expecting raven fly, 770
" Who scarce would wait till both should die,
  " Ere his repast begun;
" He flew, and perch'd, then flew once more,
" And each time nearer than before;

" I saw his wing through twilight flit,
" And once so near me he alit
" I could have smote, but lack'd the strength;
" But the slight motion of my hand,
" And feeble scratching of the sand,
" The exerted throat's faint struggling noise, 780
" Which scarcely could be call'd a voice,
" Together scared him off at length.—
" I know no more—my latest dream
" Is something of a lovely star
" Which fix'd my dull eyes from afar,
" And went and came with wandering beam,
" And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense
" Sensation of recurring sense,
" And then subsiding back to death,
" And then again a little breath, 790
" A little thrill, a short suspense,
" An icy sickness curdling o'er
" My heart, and sparks that cross'd my brain—
" A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,
" A sigh, and nothing more.

XIX.

"I woke—Where was I?—Do I see
"A human face look down on me?
"And doth a roof above me close?
"Do these limbs on a couch repose?
"Is this a chamber where I lie? 800
"And is it mortal yon bright eye,
"That watches me with gentle glance?
"I closed my own again once more,
"As doubtful that the former trance
"Could not as yet be o'er.
"A slender girl, long-hair'd, and tall,
"Sate watching by the cottage wall;
"The sparkle of her eye I caught,
"Even with my first return of thought;
"For ever and anon she threw 810
"A prying, pitying glance on me
"With her black eyes so wild and free:
"I gazed, and gazed, until I knew
"No vision it could be,—
"But that I lived, and was released
"From adding to the vulture's feast:

"And when the Cossack maid beheld
"My heavy eyes at length unseal'd,
"She smiled—and I essay'd to speak,
"But fail'd—and she approach'd, and made 820
"With lip and finger signs that said,
"I must not strive as yet to break
"The silence, till my strength should be
"Enough to leave my accents free;
"And then her hand on mine she laid,
"And smooth'd the pillow for my head,
"And stole along on tiptoe tread,
"And gently oped the door, and spake
"In whispers—ne'er was voice so sweet!
"Even music follow'd her light feet;— 830
"But those she call'd were not awake,
"And she went forth; but, ere she pass'd,
"Another look on me she cast,
"Another sign she made, to say,
"That I had nought to fear, that all
"Were near, at my command or call,
"And she would not delay
"Her due return:—while she was gone,
"Methought I felt too much alone.

XX.

"She came with mother and with sire— 840
"What need of more?—I will not tire
"With long recital of the rest,
"Since I became the Cossacks' guest:
"They found me senseless on the plain—
"They bore me to the nearest hut—
"They brought me into life again—
"Me—one day o'er their realm to reign!
"Thus the vain fool who strove to glut
"His rage, refining on my pain,
"Sent me forth to the wilderness, 850
"Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone,
"To pass the desert to a throne,—
"What mortal his own doom may guess?—
"Let none despond, let none despair!
"To-morrow the Borysthenes
"May see our coursers graze at ease
"Upon his Turkish bank,—and never
"Had I such welcome for a river
"As I shall yield when safely there.

"Comrades, good night!"—The Hetman threw 860
His length beneath the oak-tree shade,
With leafy couch already made,
A bed nor comfortless nor new
To him, who took his rest whene'er
The hour arrived, no matter where:—
His eyes the hastening slumbers steep.
And if ye marvel Charles forgot
To thank his tale, *he* wonder'd not,—
The king had been an hour asleep.

O D E.

O D E.

I.

OH Venice! Venice! when thy marble walls
  Are level with the waters, there shall be
A cry of nations o'er thy sunken halls,
  A loud lament along the sweeping sea!
If I, a northern wanderer, weep for thee,
What should thy sons do?—any thing but weep:
And yet they only murmur in their sleep.
In contrast with their fathers—as the slime,
The dull green ooze of the receding deep,
Is with the dashing of the spring-tide foam, 10
That drives the sailor shipless to his home,
Are they to those that were; and thus they creep,
Crouching and crab-like, through their sapping streets.
Oh! agony—that centuries should reap

No mellower harvest! Thirteen hundred years
Of wealth and glory turn'd to dust and tears;
And every monument the stranger meets,
Church, palace, pillar, as a mourner greets;
And even the Lion all subdued appears,
And the harsh sound of the barbarian drum, 20
With dull and daily dissonance, repeats
The echo of thy tyrant's voice along
The soft waves, once all musical to song,
That heaved beneath the moonlight with the throng
Of gondolas—and to the busy hum
Of cheerful creatures, whose most sinful deeds
Were but the overbeating of the heart,
And flow of too much happiness, which needs
The aid of age to turn its course apart
From the luxuriant and voluptuous flood 30
Of sweet sensations, battling with the blood.
But these are better than the gloomy errors,
The weeds of nations in their last decay,
When Vice walks forth with her unsoften'd terrors,
And Mirth is madness, and but smiles to slay;
And Hope is nothing but a false delay,

The sick man's lightning half an hour ere death,
When Faintness, the last mortal birth of Pain,
And apathy of limb, the dull beginning
Of the cold staggering race which Death is winning, 40
Steals vein by vein and pulse by pulse away;
Yet so relieving the o'er-tortured clay,
To him appears renewal of his breath,
And freedom the mere numbness of his chain;—
And then he talks of life, and how again
He feels his spirits soaring—albeit weak,
And of the fresher air, which he would seek;
And as he whispers knows not that he gasps,
That his thin finger feels not what it clasps,
And so the film comes o'er him—and the dizzy 50
Chamber swims round and round—and shadows busy,
At which he vainly catches, flit and gleam,
Till the last rattle chokes the strangled scream,
And all is ice and blackness,—and the earth
That which it was the moment ere our birth.

II.

There is no hope for nations!—Search the page
Of many thousand years—the daily scene,

The flow and ebb of each recurring age,
  The everlasting *to be* which *hath been*,
  Hath taught us nought or little: still we lean 60
On things that rot beneath our weight, and wear
Our strength away in wrestling with the air;
For 'tis our nature strikes us down: the beasts
Slaughter'd in hourly hecatombs for feasts
Are of as high an order—they must go
Even where their driver goads them, though to slaughter.
Ye men, who pour your blood for kings as water,
What have they given your children in return?
A heritage of servitude and woes,
A blindfold bondage, where your hire is blows. 70
What! do not yet the red-hot ploughshares burn,
O'er which you stumble in a false ordeal,
And deem this proof of loyalty the *real*;
Kissing the hand that guides you to your scars,
And glorying as you tread the glowing bars?
All that your sires have left you, all that Time
Bequeaths of free, and History of sublime,
Spring from a different theme!—Ye see and read,
Admire and sigh, and then succumb and bleed!

Save the few spirits, who, despite of all, 80
And worse than all, the sudden crimes engender'd
By the down-thundering of the prison-wall,
And thirst to swallow the sweet waters tender'd,
Gushing from Freedom's fountains—when the crowd,
Madden'd with centuries of drought, are loud,
And trample on each other to obtain
The cup which brings oblivion of a chain
Heavy and sore,—in which long yoked they plough'd
The sand,—or if there sprung the yellow grain,
'Twas not for them, their necks were too much bow'd,
And their dead palates chew'd the cud of pain:— 91
Yes! the few spirits—who, despite of deeds
Which they abhor, confound not with the cause
Those momentary starts from Nature's laws,
Which, like the pestilence and earthquake, smite
But for a term, then pass, and leave the earth
With all her seasons to repair the blight
With a few summers, and again put forth
Cities and generations—fair, when free—
For, Tyranny, there blooms no bud for thee! 100

III.

Glory and Empire! once upon these towers
  With Freedom—godlike Triad! how ye sate!
The league of mightiest nations, in those hours
  When Venice was an envy, might abate,
  But did not quench, her spirit—in her fate
All were enwrapp'd: the feasted monarchs knew
  And loved their hostess, nor could learn to hate,
Although they humbled—with the kingly few
The many felt, for from all days and climes
She was the voyager's worship;—even her crimes 110
Were of the softer order—born of Love,
She drank no blood, nor fatten'd on the dead,
But gladden'd where her harmless conquests spread;
For these restored the Cross, that from above
Hallow'd her sheltering banners, which incessant
Flew between earth and the unholy Crescent,
Which, if it waned and dwindled, Earth may thank
The city it has clothed in chains, which clank
Now, creaking in the ears of those who owe
The name of Freedom to her glorious struggles; 120
Yet she but shares with them a common woe,

And call'd the "kingdom" of a conquering foe,—
But knows what all—and, most of all, *we* know—
With what set gilded terms a tyrant juggles!

IV.

The name of Commonwealth is past and gone
  O'er the three fractions of the groaning globe;
Venice is crush'd, and Holland deigns to own
  A sceptre, and endures the purple robe;
If the free Switzer yet bestrides alone
His chainless mountains, 'tis but for a time, 130
For tyranny of late is cunning grown,
And in its own good season tramples down
The sparkles of our ashes. One great clime,
Whose vigorous offspring by dividing ocean
Are kept apart and nursed in the devotion
Of Freedom, which their fathers fought for, and
Bequeath'd—a heritage of heart and hand,
And proud distinction from each other land,
Whose sons must bow them at a monarch's motion,
As if his senseless sceptre were a wand 140
Full of the magic of exploded science—
Still one great clime, in full and free defiance,

Yet rears her crest, unconquer'd and sublime,
Above the far Atlantic!—She has taught
Her Esau-brethren that the haughty flag,
The floating fence of Albion's feebler crag,
May strike to those whose red right hands have bought
Rights cheaply earn'd with blood. Still, still, for ever
Better, though each man's life-blood were a river,
That it should flow, and overflow, than creep 150
Through thousand lazy channels in our veins,
Damm'd like the dull canal with locks and chains,
And moving, as a sick man in his sleep,
Three paces, and then faltering:—better be
Where the extinguish'd Spartans still are free,
In their proud charnel of Thermopylæ,
Than stagnate in our marsh,—or o'er the deep
Fly, and one current to the ocean add,
One spirit to the souls our fathers had,
One freeman more, America, to thee! 160

A FRAGMENT.

A FRAGMENT.

June 17, 1816.

IN the year 17—, having for some time determined on a journey through countries not hitherto much frequented by travellers, I set out, accompanied by a friend, whom I shall designate by the name of Augustus Darvell. He was a few years my elder, and a man of considerable fortune and ancient family—advantages which an extensive capacity prevented him alike from undervaluing or overrating. Some peculiar circumstances in his private history had rendered him to me an object of attention, of interest, and even of regard, which neither the reserve of his manners, nor occasional indications of an inquietude at times nearly approaching to alienation of mind, could extinguish.

I was yet young in life, which I had begun early; but my intimacy with him was of a recent date: we had been educated at the same schools and university; but his progress through these had preceded mine, and he had been deeply initiated into what is called the world, while I was yet in my noviciate. While thus engaged, I had heard much both of his past and present life; and although in these accounts there were many and irreconcileable contradictions, I could still gather from the whole that he was a being of no common order, and one who, whatever pains he might take to avoid remark, would still be remarkable. I had cultivated his acquaintance subsequently, and endeavoured to obtain his friendship, but this last appeared to be unattainable; whatever affections he might have possessed seemed now, some to have been extinguished, and others to be concentred: that his feelings were acute, I had sufficient opportunities of observing; for, although he could control, he could not altogether disguise them: still he had a power of giving to one passion the appearance of another in such a manner that it was difficult to define the nature of what was

working within him; and the expressions of his features would vary so rapidly, though slightly, that it was useless to trace them to their sources. It was evident that he was a prey to some cureless disquiet; but whether it arose from ambition, love, remorse, grief, from one or all of these, or merely from a morbid temperament akin to disease, I could not discover: there were circumstances alleged, which might have justified the application to each of these causes; but, as I have before said, these were so contradictory and contradicted, that none could be fixed upon with accuracy. Where there is mystery, it is generally supposed that there must also be evil: I know not how this may be, but in him there certainly was the one, though I could not ascertain the extent of the other —and felt loth, as far as regarded himself, to believe in its existence. My advances were received with sufficient coldness; but I was young, and not easily discouraged, and at length succeeded in obtaining, to a certain degree, that common-place intercourse and moderate confidence of common and every day concerns, created and cemented by similarity of pursuit and frequency of meeting, which is called intimacy, or friend-

ship, according to the ideas of him who uses those words to express them.

Darvell had already travelled extensively; and to him I had applied for information with regard to the conduct of my intended journey. It was my secret wish that he might be prevailed on to accompany me: it was also a probable hope, founded upon the shadowy restlessness which I had observed in him, and to which the animation which he appeared to feel on such subjects, and his apparent indifference to all by which he was more immediately surrounded, gave fresh strength. This wish I first hinted, and then expressed: his answer, though I had partly expected it, gave me all the pleasure of surprise—he consented; and, after the requisite arrangements, we commenced our voyages. After journeying through various countries of the south of Europe, our attention was turned towards the East, according to our original destination; and it was in my progress through those regions that the incident occurred upon which will turn what I may have to relate.

The constitution of Darvell, which must from his

appearance have been in early life more than usually robust, had been for some time gradually giving way, without the intervention of any apparent disease: he had neither cough nor hectic, yet he became daily more enfeebled: his habits were temperate, and he neither declined nor complained of fatigue, yet he was evidently wasting away: he became more and more silent and sleepless, and at length so seriously altered, that my alarm grew proportionate to what I conceived to be his danger.

We had determined, on our arrival at Smyrna, on an excursion to the ruins of Ephesus and Sardis, from which I endeavoured to dissuade him in his present state of indisposition—but in vain: there appeared to be an oppression on his mind, and a solemnity in his manner, which ill corresponded with his eagerness to proceed on what I regarded as a mere party of pleasure, little suited to a valetudinarian; but I opposed him no longer—and in a few days we set off together, accompanied only by a serrugee and a single janizary.

We had passed halfway towards the remains of Ephesus, leaving behind us the more fertile environs

of Smyrna, and were entering upon that wild and tenantless track through the marshes and defiles which lead to the few huts yet lingering over the broken columns of Diana — the roofless walls of expelled Christianity, and the still more recent but complete desolation of abandoned mosques—when the sudden and rapid illness of my companion obliged us to halt at a Turkish cemetery, the turbaned tombstones of which were the sole indication that human life had ever been a sojourner in this wilderness. The only caravansera we had seen was left some hours behind us, not a vestige of a town or even cottage was within sight or hope, and this "city of the dead" appeared to be the sole refuge for my unfortunate friend, who seemed on the verge of becoming the last of its inhabitants.

In this situation, I looked round for a place where he might most conveniently repose:—contrary to the usual aspect of Mahometan burial-grounds, the cypresses were in this few in number, and these thinly scattered over its extent: the tombstones were mostly fallen, and worn with age:—upon one of the most

considerable of these, and beneath one of the most spreading trees, Darvell supported himself, in a half-reclining posture, with great difficulty. He asked for water. I had some doubts of our being able to find any, and prepared to go in search of it with hesitating despondency—but he desired me to remain; and turning to Suleiman, our janizary, who stood by us smoking with great tranquillity; he said, "Suleiman, verbana su," (i. e. bring some water,) and went on describing the spot where it was to be found with great minuteness, at a small well for camels, a few hundred yards to the right: the janizary obeyed. I said to Darvell, "How "did you know this?"—He replied, "From our situa-"tion; you must perceive that this place was once in-"habited, and could not have been so without springs: "I have also been here before."

"You have been here before!—How came you "never to mention this to me? and what could you "be doing in a place where no one would remain a "moment longer than they could help it?"

To this question I received no answer. In the mean time Suleiman returned with the water, leaving the serrugee and the horses at the fountain. The

quenching of his thirst had the appearance of reviving him for a moment; and I conceived hopes of his being able to proceed, or at least to return, and I urged the attempt. He was silent—and appeared to be collecting his spirits for an effort to speak. He began.

"This is the end of my journey, and of my life—I "came here to die: but I have a request to make, a "command—for such my last words must be—You "will observe it?"

"Most certainly; but have better hopes."

"I have no hopes, nor wishes, but this—conceal my "death from every human being."

"I hope there will be no occasion; that you will re-"cover, and ——"

"Peace!—it must be so: promise this."

"I do."

"Swear it, by all that"——He here dictated an oath of great solemnity.

"There is no occasion for this—I will observe your "request; and to doubt me is ——"

"It cannot be helped,—you must swear."

I took the oath: it appeared to relieve him. He

removed a seal ring from his finger, on which were some Arabic characters, and presented it to me. He proceeded—

"On the ninth day of the month, at noon precisely "(what month you please, but this must be the day), "you must fling this ring into the salt springs which "run into the Bay of Eleusis: the day after, at the "same hour, you must repair to the ruins of the tem-"ple of Ceres, and wait one hour."

"Why?"

"You will see."

"The ninth day of the month, you say?"

"The ninth."

As I observed that the present was the ninth day of the month, his countenance changed, and he paused. As he sate, evidently becoming more feeble, a stork, with a snake in her beak, perched upon a tombstone near us; and, without devouring her prey, appeared to be stedfastly regarding us. I know not what impelled me to drive it away, but the attempt was useless; she made a few circles in the air, and returned exactly to the same spot. Darvell pointed to it, and smiled:

he spoke—I know not whether to himself or to me—but the words were only, "'Tis well!"

"What is well? what do you mean?"

"No matter: you must bury me here this evening, and exactly where that bird is now perched. You know the rest of my injunctions."

He then proceeded to give me several directions as to the manner in which his death might be best concealed. After these were finished, he exclaimed, "You perceive that bird?"

"Certainly."

"And the serpent writhing in her beak?"

"Doubtless: there is nothing uncommon in it; it is "her natural prey. But it is odd that she does not "devour it."

He smiled in a ghastly manner, and said, faintly, "It is not yet time!" As he spoke, the stork flew away. My eyes followed it for a moment, it could hardly be longer than ten might be counted. I felt Darvell's weight, as it were, increase upon my shoulder, and, turning to look upon his face, perceived that he was dead!

I was shocked with the sudden certainty which could not be mistaken—his countenance in a few minutes became nearly black. I should have attributed so rapid a change to poison, had I not been aware that he had no opportunity of receiving it unperceived. The day was declining, the body was rapidly altering, and nothing remained but to fulfil his request. With the aid of Suleiman's ataghan and my own sabre, we scooped a shallow grave upon the spot which Darvell had indicated: the earth easily gave way, having already received some Mahometan tenant. We dug as deeply as the time permitted us, and throwing the dry earth upon all that remained of the singular being so lately departed, we cut a few sods of greener turf from the less withered soil around us, and laid them upon his sepulchre.

Between astonishment and grief, I was tearless.

* * * * *

THE END.

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